

HINDU-MUSLIM CULTURAL ACCORD

BY

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To

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

At this crisis in human history, when problems of international importance are engaging your mind, the question discussed here may seem unimportant. It is, however, not merely local as it will help to solve rapidly the problems of Asia and through an Asiatic Federation, under Indian guidance, the very problem of the World's Peace, so dear to your heart, may successfully be tackled.

ہمی شرم دارم کہ پائے ملخ را
سوئے بارگاہِ سلیمان فرستم

ہمی ترسم از ریش خندِ ریاحین
کہ خار مغیلان برستان فرستم

*“Ashamed am I that to the audience of “Solomon”
I should present a wing of the fly.*

*Afazed am I that the rose shall smile,
That I send to her garden thorns of the wild”.*



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

A series of articles had appeared about 'Hindu Muslim Cultural Accord' by Dr. Syed Mahmud in the STATESMAN. As the series had evoked considerable interest we have ventured to publish them in a book form.

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CHAPTER I

THE ADVENT OF THE MUSSULMANS IN INDIA

In discussing the present day relations of the Hindus and the Muslims the first thing that we should do is to examine the history of their relations in the past. Our attention is naturally drawn first to the advent of the Muslims in India. Historians tell us a great deal about Muslim incursions from Sindh and from Afghanistan, but they scarcely mention the peaceful intercourse which went on for many many years between the western and southern coasts of India and the Islamic countries of Persia and Arabia, where Muslim merchants, missionaries and soldiers were welcomed by the local Rajas as honoured guests and valuable allies.

But how have the historians treated the conquest itself? Now, it is utterly futile to consider whether any conquest is justified. For whatever the historical explanations of domination of one people by another may be, the fact remains that there is scarcely any people of any time or any country on earth which has not been subjected to invasion in the course of its history. Conquests like floods, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions are enigmatic and impossible adequately to explain. But it is possible to compare the methods and results of conquests and weigh them in the scales provided by world history. If we do so we shall find that the Muslim conquest of India does not suffer in comparison with conquests elsewhere.

Let us take the first Muslim conquest in India by the Arabs who invaded Sindh in the eighth century. The conquests of Charles the Great of the Franks who extended his empire over the Saxons, Evards, Lombards, and other German tribes of Central Europe and northern Italy are almost contemporary. Dr. Seeliger, the historian of Charles, speaks of these conquests in these terms: "With Charles ambition and religion worked together.

Successes in arms were for him at the same time successes for Christianity. The ecclesiastical motive was specially strong in the Saxon wars". This motive finds expression in his decree, "Any who broke into, robbed, or set fire to a church was to be punished with death. Any who from contempt of Christianity ate meat in Lent, any who after the heathen rites burnt the dead, or even any who omitted to be baptized and remained heathen, were to be put to death". (*Cambridge Medieval History, Volume II.*)

When against these cruel and savage orders the Saxons revolted, Charles took terrible vengeance. One day he beheaded 4500 Saxons at Verden, and it is calculated that one third of the Saxon population was forcibly deported and the Franks were settled on the soil. "Whole districts of northern Saxony and Nordalningen were robbed of their population, i.e. the Saxons were dragged away with wives and children". Condemning the brutal severities of Charles, the historian remarks, "The Saxons are certainly not to be regarded as stubborn heathens who resisted the blessings of Christian civilization, but to be admired as a people of strong purpose defending their national characteristics".

The second example is furnished by the Norman conquest of England. William I invaded Britain in 1066. He advanced towards the north and he met with great and determined resistance from the people. Let us hear what John Lingard has to say regarding William's methods. "As his (William's) former attempts to enforce obedience had failed, he now resolved to exterminate the refractory natives, and to place a wilderness as a barrier between the Normans and their implacable enemies. With this view he led his retainers from York; dispersed them in small divisions over the country and gave them orders to spare neither man nor beast, but destroy the houses, corn, implements of husbandry and whatever might be useful or necessary to the support of human life.... The number of men, women, and children who fell victims to this barbarous policy is said to have exceeded one hundred thousand. For nine years not a patch of cul-

tivated ground could be seen between York and Durham*'. (J. Lingard: *History of England*, Vol. II, P. 25.)

Of the general policy of William the Conqueror, Lingard says, "He made it the principal object of the Government to depress the natives and to exalt the foreigners; and within a few years every dignity in Church, every place of emolument and authority in the state, and almost all the property in land had passed into the possession of the Normans". Again, "contempt and oppression became the portion of the natives, whose farms were pillaged, females violated and persons imprisoned at the caprice of these petty local tyrants".

About these wars another historian says, "War in the mildest form in those days was little regulated by any consideration for the conquered". (Adams: *Political History of England*, Vol. II, P. 36.)

During the first half of the seventeenth century the Thirty Years' War took place in Germany. Many European powers were involved in this war, which began as a religious conflict between the Protestants and Roman Catholics and ended as a general scramble for power. Dr. A. W. Ward writing about the most appalling consequences of the war states, "each one of these marches, counter marches, sieges, reliefs, invasions, occupations, evacuations and re-occupations which we have noted, and a far larger number of military movements that we have passed by, were accompanied by devastation carried out impartially by 'friend' or foe....as the war went on whole districts were converted into deserts". Let us note some of these results. Of the 35,000 Bohemian villages hardly more than 6,000 were left standing. Moravia suffered in the same proportion. Bavaria's sufferings were terrible, "famine and desolation stalked unchecked". Franconia and Swabia were desolated by war, famine and disease. The lower Palatinate was left little better than a desert. Other parts of Germany were equally badly affected. It is calculated that as the result of the Thirty Years' War the population of Germany was reduced from over 16 millions to under 6 millions; in some parts only a sixth of the population survived and in the

Lower Palatinate only the tenth part. Agriculture, trade and industry all greatly declined and a deadly moral blight descended upon the land. People became reckless in the conduct of life, their self-indulgence was wholly unrestrained and "womankind had been dragged away into the servile gypsydom of the moving camps".

These are some of the instances of the horrors which the peoples belonging to the same race perpetrated in their fights with one another. In the last two cases the conquerors and the conquered professed, in addition, the same religion.

Of the wars which peoples of Europe waged against the coloured races the less said the better. For example, one might refer to the bloody massacres, systematic persecution, treachery and loot which the Spaniards—led by such monsters in human form as Cortes and Pizarro—inflicted upon the gentle, un-suspecting and civilised inhabitants of Mexico and Peru. With their holy scriptures in their hands and their chaplains by their side for the salving of their conscience, they rained upon their weak and defenceless victims all the horrors which their perverse ingenuity was capable of conceiving. The sickening stories of these black crimes against heathen humanity by the standard bearers of the Christian faith is narrated in the doleful pages of Prescott.

The continents of Africa and Australia furnish further illustrations of the methods by which the whites spread disease and desolation among the primitive inhabitants of these lands with the result that the natives have been either exterminated or threatened with extermination in many parts. Christian missionaries and imperialist agents today bemoan the effects of the appearance of the whites amidst the blacks and admit that in Africa Islam is spreading fast but Christianity makes little headway.

If against the deeds by which the western nations extended their empires we set the methods followed by the Muslims, the contrast is very marked. Here is what J. H. Robinson, the author of the *Ordeal of Civilization*, says regarding the Muslim invasion of France, "historians

commonly regard it as a matter of great good luck that Charles the Hammer and his barbarous soldiers succeeded in defeating and driving back the Muhammadans at Tours. But had they been permitted to settle in South France, they might have developed science and art far more rapidly than did the Franks. It is difficult to say whether it was a good thing or a bad thing that the Moors, as the Muhammadans in Spain were called, did not get control of a portion of Gaul". Regarding the conquest of Spain by the Moors, Alison Phillips, the historian, remarks, "To the mass of the population the conquest was, for the present, a pure gain. The Jews, escaped from brutal persecution, were the eager allies of the Arabs. As the conquerors swept away the Roman fiscal system, which the Visigoths had retained and replaced it by a poll tax (which was not levied on old men, women, children, cripples, or the very poor) and a land tax, the gain to the down-trodden serfs of the fisc was immense. They acquired personal freedom".

Spain, which the Moors made prosperous and rich, the home of chivalry, and the nursery of science, philosophy and the fine arts, was re-conquered five hundred years later by the Christians, whose bigotry and narrow-mindedness delivered it over to religious persecution and tyranny. In this deadly grip liberty was destroyed, industry choked and the springs of vitality dried. Spain has not yet recovered from the results of its "deliverance" at the hands of the Christians.

Now let us turn to India and its conquest by Muslims. The Muslim conquerors came to India in three stages. In 712 A. D. first invasions took place, the invaders being Arabs led by Muhammad Bin Qasim. The second set of invasions occurred at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century. They were led by Subuktgin and Mahmud of Ghazni who belonged to a Turkish family. The final stage which led to the establishment of Muslim rule in India consisted of the invasion of Muhammad Ghori two hundred years later.

Regarding the invasion of Muhammad Bin Qasim two things may be noted, (1) that oppression of the native

rulers was the prominent cause of success of the Arabs, and (2) that apart from the slaughter and plunder during the actual course of war, the moment victory was won and peace concluded, a most enlightened policy of administration was followed, which stands in shining contrast to the deeds narrated about the Europeans. Here are some of the orders.

“Muhammad Qasim then ordered 12 dirams weight of silver to be consigned to each man, because all their property had been plundered. He appointed people from among the villagers and the chief citizens to collect the fixed taxes from the cities and villages that there might be a feeling of strength and protection”.

“Muhammad Qasim maintained their (Brahmin) dignity and passed orders confirming their pre-eminence. They were protected against oppression and violence. Each of them was entrusted with an office”.

Hajjaj, Governor of Iraq, the uncle of Qasim and his immediate superior, wrote as follows to him: “As they (Hindus) have made submission and have agreed to pay taxes to the Khalifa, nothing more can be properly required from them. They have been taken under our protection and we cannot in any way stretch out our hands upon their lives or property. Permission is given to them to worship their gods. Nobody must be forbidden or prevented from following his own religion. They may live in their houses in whatever manner they like” (*Elliot*, Vol. I, pp. 115-118).

“He (Muhammad Bin Qasim) directed the nobles, the principal inhabitants, and the Brahmans to build their temples, traffic with Muhammadans, live without fear and to strive to better themselves. He also enjoined them to maintain the indigent Brahmans with kindness, observe the rites and customs of their ancestors and give oblations and alms to the Brahmans according to former practice” (*Elliot*, Vol. I, p. 186).

The invasions of the Ghaznavides were undertaken more for the sake of plunder than conquest. Mahmud, whom the historians have invested with the character of a religious zealot, had in sober fact little ecclesiastical

fervour. His chief aim was the establishment of an empire from the Punjab to the Euphrates and his Indian adventures were mainly intended to provide him with the means for the fulfilment of his imperialistic designs, which embraced even the subordination of the Caliph to his will. This explains why he attacked one after another the great centres of wealth in northern India and never seriously considered the problem of subjugating and ruling the country. A curious light is thrown upon his policy and proceedings by the fact that in his armies which fought on the confines of his dominions, Indian troops formed part of his forces. There is no doubt that the Ghaznavides had a high opinion of the military qualities of the Hindus, and the Hindus appeared to have had no repugnance to serving them. Mahmud's son, Masud, employed Servand Rao in his fight with his brother, and Tilak, son of Jai Sen, to bring to book Ahmad Nialtigin, the rebel governor of the Indian province. Again, he raised Hindu troops to fight against the Saljuk Turks, while his successor deputed the Kotwal of Ghazni to recall Bijai Rai, a Hindu general, to Ghazni from where he had fled on account of some political dissensions.

The conquests of Muhammad Ghori and his general Qutubuddin Aibak were in the nature of a triumphal march made easy by the internecine quarrels of the Rajput princes who then controlled the destinies of northern India. Within the interval of less than a quarter of a century the whole of northern India had not only been overrun but brought under subjection. But the establishment of Muslim rule implied in the beginning little more than the substitution here and there of Hindu Rajas and Zamindars by Muslim chiefs. Sir Wolseley Haig in the Cambridge History of India points out:—

“The rhapsodies of Muslim historians in their accounts of the suppression of a rising or the capture of a fortress, of towns and villages burnt, of whole districts laid waste,...might delude us into the belief that the early Muslim conquest of Northern India was one prolonged holy war waged for the extirpation of idolatry and the propagation of Islam, had we not proof that this

cannot have been the case.....All Muslim rulers in India, from Mahmud downwards, accepted when it suited them to do so, the allegiance of Hindu rulers and landholders, and confirmed them as vassals in the possession of their hereditary lands”.

And again, “on this* (Hindu) population they (the Muslim rulers) relied not only for the means of support, but also to a great extent for the subordinate machinery of government; for there can be no doubt that practically all minor posts connected with the assessment and collection of the land revenue and with accounts of public and state finance generally were filled, as they were many generations later, by Hindus”.

“Rebellion and overt disaffection were repressed with ruthless severity, and were doubtless made occasions of proselytism, but the sin was rebellion, not religious error, and there is no reason to believe that the position of the Hindu cultivator was worse under a Muslim than under a Hindu landlord”.

“It was certainly possible for Hindus to obtain justice even against Muslims”. (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, pp. 89 and 90.)

Of the identity of the economic interests of the Hindus and Musalmans it is scarcely necessary to make more than a passing reference. As the Muslim rulers had adopted India as their home, therefore the question of the drain of India's wealth from this country to Central Asia did not arise at all. The Muslim rulers acknowledged no suzerain beyond India's borders. In early days some Sultans paid occasional homage to the Caliph, but during the Mughal period even this was abandoned. Not only was Indian wealth not sent out of the country, but India was greatly enriched by the flow of precious metals from abroad.

Sir Thomas Roe, who visited the court of Jehangir, complains, “Europe bleedeth to enrich Asia”. Hawkins, his contemporary, echoes the cry, “all natives bring coin and carry away the commodities for the same; and this coin is burried in India and goeth not out”.

Bernier, the French traveller, in a letter to Colbert, the Finance Minister of Louis XIV, writes, "it would not escape notice that gold and silver after circulating in every other quarter of the globe, came at length to be swallowed up, lost in some manner in Hindustan". Such quotations could be multiplied.*

The advent of the Muslims into India gave an impetus to India's trade with the world and the Muslims introduced many new arts and crafts into the country. The Muslim rulers took a keen interest in fostering them, as is made evident by the fact that most of them maintained huge establishments where the finest Indian craftsmen were engaged; nor did the rulers make distinction between their subjects when the question of extending financial assistance arose. Muhammad Tughlaq's charities during the famine in the Doab are well known to students of Indian history. Hafiz Rahmat Khan in the 18th century followed this example. There was a terrible famine in Hindustan and the poor and stricken Hindu inhabitants of Mewat arrived in large numbers in Rohilkhand. Rahmat Khan engaged them for two years in building the fortification around Pilibhit and when fortifications were completed they were pulled down and rebuilt again. They were neither his subjects nor his co-religionists. When the famine was over they returned to their country.

Aurangzeb when pressed by the Sheriff of Mecca for money, gave instructions to the merchants of Surat that only if safe delivery and distributions among the poor of Mecca and Medina were guaranteed, money might be despatched, but, "if this is impossible, why should it not be distributed among the poor of this country. Because the manifestation of the Holy God is reflected in every place (i.e. God is omnipresent). (Billimoria: *Letters of Aurangzeb*, p. 166-7)

* Billimoria, *Letters of Aurangzeb*, p. 166-7.

CHAPTER II

EARLY CULTURAL CONTACT OF ISLAM WITH INDIA

How Muslims helped to popularize Hindu Science

From the early days of Islam the Muslims not only took keen interest in the science and literature of the Hindus but even regarded the latter's country with such love and respect that it seemed to have acquired a kind of religious sanction.

It is reported that the Prophet once said, "I get cool breezes from the side of Hind" indicating that India in the Prophet's opinion was a civilised country and that the Indians were believers in God. Two Indians are reported to have gone to Arabia in the Prophet's time. Their names were:—

- (1) Sarmanak said to have been the Raja of Kanauj, and
- (2) Ratan who collected the sayings of the Prophet. The collection is still extant and known in the Arab world as *Al'Rataniyat*.

Ibni Ali Hatim relates on Ali's authority that the valley of Hind where Adam descended from Heaven, and the valley of Mecca, which had the tradition of Abraham, were the best valleys in the world (*Subhatul Marjan*). Another tradition is quoted by Maulana Ghulam Ali Azad on the authority of Prophet's cousin Ibne Abbas that according to Prophet Adam brought to India a seedling from Heaven which grew into a tree whereof the famous staff of Moses was made. It is further reported in *Sahih Muslim* on the authority of a companion of the Prophet Abu Horaira that the Prophet mentioned certain rivers as belonging to Heaven and one of them was a river of India. Again Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami mentions that the words *Tooba*, *Sundas* and *Ablai* which occur in the Quran are of Sanskrit origin. A legend commonly referred to by some of the Muslim writers is that after the

Deluge the Noahs' Ark came to India and some of his sons settled down. Yet another tradition says:—

“There was a Prophet in India. His colour was dark and his name was Kan” (Kandh, Kandhya or Kanahya)

(Arabic Text)

Kana Filhind Nabian Aswada Launahu Wa Ismahu Kan

It is said that Adam went to Jadda from the Island of Sarandip via India and brought Eve to this country. He met Eve in the valley of Mecca at Muzdalfa (the meeting ground). Muslim pilgrims yearly meet one another in this valley in memory of this meeting of Adam and Eve during the period of Haj. It is related on the authority of Hazrat Aysha, the wife of the Prophet, and Barida that Adam built the Kaba on the very place where present Kaba stands at Mecca. Then he prayed and received forgiveness from God. Subsequently he settled down in this country with their children. The famous Biblical story of Cain and Abel is well-known. The Muslim tradition places the incident of the murder of Abel by his brother Cain in India.*

Another son, *Shees* (gift of God) was born to Adam in India and tradition runs that he is buried in Ajodhya. There is a large grave near the famous temple of Ajodhya and it is believed to be the grave of *Shees*.

According to Quran man is the Caliph of God on Earth and so this is a great and exclusive privilege of India that the first man and the first Caliph of God on Earth lived and died in this country.

From these Muslim traditions the following inferences can be drawn which show the extent to which India was held in esteem and love in the earlier days of Islam.

(1) As the First man and the First Caliph of God lived and died here, India can rightly claim as the first Capital of Humanity.

(2) And the First man was also a prophet of God and therefore the land of Hind has the privilege of having the first Prophet on Earth.

* *Sabhatul—Marjan* by Ghulam Ali Azad.

(3) It therefore follows that the Ruhul-Quds (Gabriel) visited India first and so India has the privilege of having God's Revelations first of all.

(4) It is related by Ibn Saad in *Tabaqat*, by Bakr Shafai in *Gheelanat* and also by Abd bin Hameed and Ibn Asakir on the authority of Hazrat Saad bin Jabur that God created Adam from the clay of a place which came to be known as *Vagani*. It has been ascertained that *Vagani* was some place in India. And as Adam was the first man it follows that the entire humanity was created from the clay of India.

(5) The Prophet's cousin Ibn Abbas relates that it was at this place (India) that God took the famous pledge from the future humanity of His Godhood and therefore India is the holy land where the humanity first acknowledged its Creator.

It would therefore appear from the above that the spirits of all the Prophets and all the pious men graced this land first with their presence before they were physically born.

(6) Abu Horaira, Tibrani and Abu Naim ibn Asakir relate that Gabriel informed Adam that Muhammad would be born of his children and would be the last of the Prophets. According to this tradition the declaration of Muhammad's prophethood was first made in this land. "The sacred Light of the Prophet Muhammad which was the first to be created in the universe appeared on the horizon of Mecca after it had passed through different stages having been transferred from the sacred body of Adam. As Adam and after him Hazrat Shees lived in India, the first ray of that Light appeared in this country as its last ray shed its lustre in Hedjaz".

In this connection, it may not be out of place to quote the following Arabic couplet in praise of Prophet Muhammad by a contemporary Poet, Hazrat Kaab ibn Zohair. The verse is significant inasmuch as it lends support to the above tradition:—

*Inar Rasul laghudo leyaftazaho behi + Mehndi man
seyauful laho sulul.*

(The Prophet is doubtless a sacred light which illuminates the world. He is God's unsheathed sword made of Indian pattern).

(7) A tradition runs that *Hajr Aswad* was brought by Adam from Heaven. The Muslims revered it for this reason. It therefore obviously came to India first and was then taken to Mecca by Adam.

(8) Abu Moosa Ashari, Ibn Jarir and Baihaqi relate that Adam was taught all the arts and crafts in Heaven. It therefore follows that India was the first home of arts and crafts.

(9) A tradition also runs that Adam died in India.* His grave is said to be in Kashmir.

(10) Noah's Ark came to India and India was saved from the ravages of the Deluge (Abdullah bin Abbas).

These traditions may or may not be true, but they prove how much India was loved and respected by the earlier Muslims. They almost gave it a place as high as Mecca itself. They did not only try to establish the earliest possible connection between India and Arabia but also gave this country a religious sanction.

LAND OF WISDOM

Ali, the Fourth Caliph, is reported to have said, "The land where books were first written and from where wisdom and knowledge sprang is India".

Omar, the Second Caliph, though told that "Indian rivers are pearls, her mountains rubies, her trees perfumes" was against attacking India, since he knew that the followers of Islam, as of other religions, were free to practise their faith in that country. After the conquest of Egypt Amar bin A's, the Governor, wanted Omar to let him allow to dig up the Isthmus of Suez but Omar replied that if it was done the European nations would pounce on the Asiatic countries.

"With the Arab conquest came the Arab mind to study and understand the cultural and intellectual

* *Sabhatul—Marjan*, an Arabic book by Moulana Ghulam Ali Azad.

achievements of those whom they had conquered" says a writer of eminence.

Muslim interest in India, particularly in Indian science, religion, astronomy, astrology, medicine and mathematics, present today a great historical phenomenon going back to as early as the second century Hijra.

Even during the Omayyad period the cultural contact between the two people had begun. In the time of Abdul Malik bin Marwan there were some Indians in the Finance Department at Basra who helped to reform the coinage. Ma'aviya is reported to have planted a colony of Hindus in Syria, specially at Antioch, and Hajjaj is said to have established them at Kashgar. "The black-eyed and olive-complexioned Hindus were brushing their shoulders against those of the Muslims in the cities of the Caliphate" (Nicholson: *Literary History of the Arab*).

Almansoor, the early Abbaside Caliph, started a Translation Bureau known as *Baitul-Hikmat*. In the time of Haroon Rashid and his son Mamun, Christian monasteries of Syria, Asia Minor and the Levant and the Buddhist monasteries of Balkh and Bokhara were ransacked for Greek and Indian manuscripts. These were with vast labour and erudition translated into Arabic. During this period a number of Indian scholars besides Christians and Jews were maintained at the Court of the Caliphs. The magian imbued with Persian and Indian learning was the first to bring to Baghdad, in the time of Almansoor, Indian and Buddhist learning, religion, custom and traditions.

The Barmark family in the time of Haroon Rashid encouraged cultural contact with India. Their generosity to men of letters was no less than that of the Caliph himself.

GREAT SCIENTISTS

There were several Hindu Vaidas (physicians) at the Court of early Abbaside Caliphs. Manika and Saleh were mentioned as great physicians. The former had cured Haroon Rashid of a serious malady. Another Hindu physician Dhan was the Director-General of the

hospital of Barmark at Baghdad. There were other Hindus serving in different hospitals in Baghdad and helping in the translation of Sanskrit books on medicine. Manika helped in the translation of Brahma Sidhant of Brahmagupta known as *Sindh-o-Hind*. Kanke Pandit was the best known astrologer at the Court of Baghdad. His works on astrology were translated into Arabic.

The Sanskrit moral tales *Panchatantra* was also translated into Arabic known as *Kalaila Damna*. It was from this Arabic translation that this world-famous book was translated into Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Syriac, Spanish, French, Turkish, English and Persian.

Ibn Nadim gives a list of the works on Indian medicine known to the Muslims. Emissaries were sent to India to collect indigenous herbs.

Ismail came to India to study astrology as did Ahmad Khafi Darlani about 280 A.H. to study astronomy and mathematics. He was well-versed in these sciences. Bahla, Bazigar and Falbalfall (?) were other astronomers in the Court of Haroon Rashid.

Brahmagupta's other work, besides Sidhanta, was also translated under the name of *Alarkand*. Aryabhata's Sanskrit work was translated by Farazi and entitled as the *Arjband*.

Besides, among many other Hindu astrologers whose works were known to the Arabs, the following names are given:—Judar Hindi with his well-known work as *Asrarul Masail*, Singhal Hindi with his work known as *Kitabul Mawalid*.

The Muslims' intellectual interest in India and Indian science was not confined to the patronage of the Baghdad Court. Indian science aroused such curiosity that during the next few centuries we find a host of Arab historians, scholars, geographers and travellers, visiting India—to obtain first hand information.

SCHOLARSHIP

According to Dr. Suchaen, in Alberuni's time there were in Arabia circles keenly interested in getting the Indian scientific works translated into Arabic. They

were familiar enough with the subject matter to criticise the different representations of the same subject and to give preference to one. Abdullah Bin Ahmad Sarqasti wrote a pamphlet criticising Sidhanta enumerating Brahmagupta's mistakes but Ibn Said of Spain wrote a book in reply to Abdulkah bin Ahmad proving that Brahmagupta was right.

The Arab scholars who visited India as well as those scholars who went from India to Baghdad carried to that country much of Indian scientific knowledge subsequently assimilated with the lore of Islam in which Indian influence was perhaps more prominent than Greek. "But everything", says a scholar, "that the Arabs received from India was given by them a new character and a new garb in which it was later transmitted to Europe".

In the Second Century A. H. a Religious Academy was founded by Mamun and free discussions in which men of all religions used to take part were held there. Many Pandits joined these discussions. But "it is curious indeed", says an eminent writer, "that with all the intellectual forces working at Baghdad Court, the Indians made very little response to the genuine philosophical interest of the Muslims in India. They received Muslim travellers with reserve and suspicion, and very few, if any, showed any inclination towards acquiring any knowledge of Islamic religion, philosophy and social customs". Some Muslims scholars think that that suspicion and reserve persist even today.

The Arab writers did not leave the field of religion. Many writers like Abul Abbas, Zarqun, Almoqaddasi and Sahristani, and others wrote on Hindu religion and customs.

CHAPTER III

HINDU INTEREST IN ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

In spite of the "reserve and suspicion" with which Hindus received Muslim travellers, some of the Hindu Rajas tried to acquire knowledge of Islamic teachings. In the time of Haroon Rashid, a Hindu ruler asked Baghdad for a Muslim theologian to be sent to India to acquaint him with Islam.

A vernacular or Sanskrit translation of Quran is said to have been made in 280 A.H. by the order of another Hindu Raja. It is further reported that a ruler of Alra wrote to Abdullah bin Omar, the governor of Mansura in Sindh, to send some one to initiate him into Islamic religion—(Ajaib-al-Hind).

Masudi who visited India in the 10th century says, "The Raja of Cambay was interested in religious discourses and exchanged ideas with Muslims and other people who might have visited his kingdom." According to the same authority, in the Hindu kingdom of Gujrat, Islam was respected and protected, and in all parts of his country rose the beautiful mosques where Muslims worshipped.

Buzurg bin Shaharyar, who was in India in the 9th century, writes, "The Indian rulers are well-disposed towards the Muslims. The Buddhists of Ceylon love the Muslims and are extremely kind to them". In the time of the Second Caliph Omar they deputed two emissaries to Arabia to collect particulars about Islam. One of them died on return journey but the other returned safely and gave a glowing report expressing "his admiration for the Caliph who led a simple and unostentatious life".

Sulaiman who came to India in the 9th century says, "The Vallabhi king of Gujrat liked the Arabs most". Shaharyar adds "The King of Alor in Kashmir has got the Koran translated in his vernacular and hears the translation read to him daily". Shaharyar further tells us about his visit to Sairaf, a port on the west of Iraq

where Hindus mostly Gujaratis, Multanis and Sindhis were invited by Arab merchants to a dinner. Special arrangements were made for their food. "These Hindus struck the local people by the ease with which they spoke colloquial Arabic".

Ibn Hauqal writes—"The dress of the Hindus and the Muslims was the same".

Mohamed bin Qasim "left the administration entirely in the hands of the natives". The Hindus of Sindh appealed to him for freedom of worship. The matter was referred to Hajjaj. The Governor of Iraq, who wrote, "Permission is given to Hindus to worship their own gods. Nobody must be forbidden or prevented from following his own religion. They may live in their houses in whatever manner they like". The customary honour and deference due to the Brahmins and their three per cent share in the land revenue was maintained, says Von Kremer. The Hindus were allowed to build temples, traffic with the Muslims, live without any fear and strive to better themselves in every possible way. There cannot indeed be a better example of toleration than that which the Arabs granted to the Hindus in Sindh. Al-Astakhari visited India in the 10th century. He is the author of many works on geography, which included a map of Sindh, the first of its kind. According to him Hindus and Muslims in their social intercourse "were tending towards a harmony of their manners and customs".

Aljahiz (2nd century A.H.) writes, "The Hindu excels in astrology, mathematics, medicine and various other sciences. They have developed to perfection arts like sculpture, painting and architecture. They have collections of poetry, philosophy, literature and science of morals. From India we received that book called Kalilah wa Dimnah. These people have judgment and are brave. They possess the virtues of cleanliness and purity. Contemplation has originated with them". Yaqubi (9th century) writes, "The Hindus are superior to all other nations in intelligence and thoughtfulness. They are more exact in astronomy and astrology than any other people. The Sidhanta is a good proof of their intellectual

powers; by this book the Greeks and the Persians were also profited. In medicine their opinion ranks first". Such quotations can be multiplied.

These revealing utterances of Muslim scholars show how deep was their insight into Hindu life and thought and how sympathetic their attitude towards India. These Muslim scholars "rendered invaluable service to the cause of cultural fellowship" in those ancient and medieval times, the history of which has yet to be written. In short, the Arabs regarded India as the fountain of "wisdom" and the Arab writers generally considered this country as the store-house of knowledge.

Of what Muslim rulers, scholars and poets in India did to promote the cultural understanding and popularise Hindu science, literature, sentiments and ideas I give only a few instances out of many. Of the eight notable Hindi poets in the 12th century A.D. four were Muslims—Masud, Kutubali, Akram and Faiz. Khusru, Abdur Rahim Khan-Khana, Daud, Malik Mohammad Jaisi and many others are the shining lights of Hindi literature which owes a great deal to Kabir and his son Mulla Kamal. The works of Kutban's *Murgavati*, Janjhan's *Madhumapati*, Osman's *Chatrauli*, Mali Mohamad Jaisi's *Padmavat*, and Shaikh Nabir's *Gyan Deepka*, Noor Mohamad's *Indravati* and Qasim's *Hans Jawahar* have also enriched Hindi literature. Rahiman's *Netis* are in no way inferior to Goshain Tulsidas's *Dohas*. Rahiman's *Maduhshak*, *Barvay Naika* and *Niti Sangraha*, Kadir's *Bhasha Bhoo-shan*, Tahir's *Gunsagar* and *Kok-Sagar*, Mobarak's *Bal-shatak* and *Alakshatak*, occupy high place. Raskhan was a bhagat of Shri Krishna and sang enchantingly in praises of the Gopis' Shyam.

Amir Ali Meer and Zahoor Baksh in recent times have been well-known Hindi poets. Nazir Akberabadi was a bhagti of Shri Krishna. Mirza Bedil, a famous poet, was a Bhagat of Ram.

Khusru's book *Nih-Sephr* is a striking illustration of the keenness of the Muslims to promote this understanding. "Sanskrit is pure as pearl", said Khusru. In this

book Khusru has proved India from every point of view superior to all other countries of the world.

Alberuni's visit to India is a "notable event in the history of Indo-Muslim friendship in the field of learning". The Muslim Arabs began to pay frequent visits to the West Coast of India and their influence in Malabar rapidly grew. A story is told that in the 9th century A.D. the last of the Cheraman Perumal Kings embraced Islam and went to Arabia a few years later and died there. He sent some Arabs with instructions about the administration of his country, who were cordially received at Malabar and allowed to build mosques. The Zamorin became patron of the Arab traders, who in return gave him help and support in his campaigns. He was well-disposed towards Islam and openly encouraged conversion among his subjects because sea-voyage was forbidden to the Hindus. Men were not available for manning the merchant ships.

Shri Shankaracharya was born at a time when Muslims were beginning their activities in India and had already gained a notable success by converting the King of the land. He was born and brought up in a place where many ships from Arabia and Persian Gulf unloaded. If his extreme Monism which he attempted to establish on revealed scriptures reflected some of the ideas that were being preached all round it would not be matter of great surprise. But his successors Ramanuja, Vishnu-swami Madhwanand and Nimbarka give clear indication of Islamic influence in their speculations and religious tone. In the give and take of culture between Hindus and Muslims, it is difficult to assess accurately the share of each. But the fact remains that a number of ideas were absorbed into Hinduism through its direct contact with Islam.

Certain other characteristics of the South Indian thought from the 9th Century onwards also strongly point to Islamic influence. The ever increasing emphasis on monotheism, emotional worship, self-surrender, the laxity in the caste system and indifference towards mere ritual did not occur in the North for all early medieval reformers belonged to South.

One reason for this was obviously the influence of Islam, steadily and increasingly exerted in this very period and in this very region till it was suddenly stopped by the advent of the Europeans. How else can we account for the phenomena that reforming shears were applied to the very parts anathematized by Islam and the new acquisitions were the very features in that religion (Islam).

In short, the progress of religious thought in the South reveals a growing absorption of Muslim ideas into the Hindu system.

On the other hand, the Sufi idea of *Fana* (the total annihilation) is distinctly derived from the *Nirvana* of Buddhism. The *Analhaque* (I'm the truth) of Mansoor is the echo of the Vedantic "Soham" (I'm that). The *Pasp-anfas* of Sufis is derived from the yogic breathing exercises. The *Zikr* of the Sufi is the Hindu *Japa*. The *Tasbih* is borrowed from the Buddhist *Mala*.

CHAPTER IV

HINDU-MUSLIM CULTURAL ACCORD HAS DEEP ROOTS

After the attainment of independence the question of common language and culture has become a live issue but few people realise that the impact of Muslim culture with the ancient culture of India has brought about a fusion which during the past one thousand years has contributed in no small measure to the evolution of a common Indian culture.

Under British rule, however, separatist tendencies received encouragement and this found expression in the terms of the Two Nation Theory based on two separate cultures, the disastrous consequences of which are too well-known to be repeated. This temporarily blurred our vision and stands in the way of our taking a detached view of the gradual assimilation of Indian culture by Muslims as is reflected in their dress, language, arts and crafts, social customs and ceremonies and practically in all aspects of their every day life.

It is heartening to find that wisdom has at long last dawned on the people and the essential unity of Indian culture is slowly but steadily receiving wider appreciation. It is desirable that at this turning point in our National history a dispassionate study of the different aspects of the evolution of our culture should be made. I have, therefore, attempted below an appraisalment of this assimilation in its proper historical perspective.

It has been said that the Musalmans, as alien conquerors, have throughout their history in India maintained their isolation from the indigenous inhabitants. The legend goes that the Musalmans of India have so little in common with the Hindus and so much in common with their co-religionists outside India, that they cannot be expected to have any interest in India's welfare. What light does history throw upon this?

Racially, the Muslims of India with the exception perhaps of a very small minority, are indistinguishable from the Hindus. There is very little trace of the Arab, Turk or Persian left. The central Asian clans which entered India in the wake of the Ghaznavides, Ghories, Mughals, Turks and Afghans whose descendents exercised authority and dominion for five hundred years or more, have almost disappeared. The Muslim conquerors have merged into the mass of the Indian people. Tribes, clans, and families whose names resound in the annals of the Muslims rule are today all but forgotten. Conversion, marriage and settlement in India without any desire to return home or resume touch with the people there have largely brought racial homogeneity.

Socially, the Musalmans of India developed an organisation similar to that of the Hindus. Muslim society in India, unlike most Muslim society elsewhere, became divided into something like classes. Distinction between them was based not merely on economic and vocational considerations, but also on heredity recognised throughout the middle ages as a factor of supreme importance among both the Musalmans and the Hindus. This was not a good influence; yet its existence cannot be denied.

Writing about the Hindu influence on Muslims the *Indian Social Reformer* (Bombay 1931) says, "It is not a thing of which the Hindu community can be proud that its influence on its neighbours should be gauged by the extent of the prevalence of child marriages and caste among them. We have every sympathy with Muslim reformers who are labouring to get rid of these evils". In spite of the Islamic injunction to the contrary this development shows what influence the Hindus exercised on the Muslims in the past.

In every social system woman holds a characteristic position. Arab and Turkish societies differ considerably from Hindu in this matter. Yet in India the Muslims followed not the customs of Arabia and Turkestan as of India. In dress, ornaments, traditions of social intercourse, and daily routine of life, they adopted Indian ways and manners. The Muslim marriage ceremonies were

adopted from Hindu. "Nisbat", "Haldi", "Tel", "Mandwa", "Barat", "Jalwa", "Kangan", "Sehra", etc., were Muslim adaptations of Hindu ceremonies. The only difference that remained was that in the Hindu marriage the bride and bridegroom went round the fire to the chanting of Vedic Mantras, while in the Muslim marriage they were joined together in bonds of matrimony by the Qazi who read appropriate verses from the Quran. The fundamental difference between Hindu and Muslim marriage is that while the former is a sacrament, the latter is in the nature of a contract. But this conception of Muslim marriage seems to have undergone some change in India and it is now regarded more as a sacrament than a contract. Early marriage of girls, abstention from widow marriage, dependence and subordination of women, and the use of the veil are common both to Hindus and Muslims.

It is true that the religious fasts and festivals of the two communities were different but the manner of observing them was in some ways similar. Muharram had affinities with Dasehra. Shab-e-Barat with Shivaratri, Ramzan and Id with Navaratri, etc. Many fairs and festive occasions were common to both communities and both Hindus and Muslims often took part in even the peculiarly communal festivals such as Holi and Muharram.

The Muslims adopted many Hindu funeral ceremonies, for example, the Tija, the Daswan, etc. Ceremonies concerning pregnancy and childbirth like the one held on the attainment of the seventh month, on the sixth day of childbirth, the shaving of the child's head (Mundan), licking of "Khir", boring of ears, birth anniversary, etc., are common to both. In certain marriage ceremonies a widow is not allowed to take part, viz., "Bi Bi Sahib ki Kanduri", touching of nose ring, etc., etc. Even such purely Hindu practices as the immolation of the widow on the death of her husband and "Jauhar" were occasionally practised by the Muslims. Ibn-e-Batuta relates the story of the defeat of Ainul Mulk by Muhammad Bin Tughlaq and tells how his wife plunged into death after her husband. The Zafar Namah describes the "Jauhar" committed by

Kamaluddin, Governor of Bhatnair, when he proceeded to fight against Timur. Amir Khusru's admiration is evident from his famous lines:—

*Chun Zan-e-Hindu kase dar ashiqui diwana neest
Sokhtan ber Shamae murda kare har parwana neest*

(No one is like the Hindu woman in the intoxication of love, for not every winged one has the courage to immolate itself on the funeral pyre of its beloved).

Dress is the most outstanding expression of the inner character of society—of its grades and classes, of its psychological values, taboos and reticences. It is important to notice how Muslims in India largely discarded the garments worn in Arabia, Iran and Central Asia and developed costumes and clothes suited to the country. The Arab Amama, Jubba, Rida, Tahmad and Tasma, and the Central Asian Kulah, Nima, Moza, etc. gave place to Indian pagree, and Chira, Kurta and Angarkha, patka and dupatta and pajama. Early as the 10th Century A.D., Ibn Haukal and Masudi wrote that the mode of life of both the Hindus and the Muslims was so similar that it was difficult to distinguish one from the other.

It is very interesting to note that one of the reasons why Timur invaded India is said that the Musalman Kings of India had given full religious liberty to the Hindus and had adopted their manners and customs so much so that they could hardly be distinguished from Hindus.

The French traveller, Monsieur Thono writes concerning the Deccan that all those who held high offices, Muslims or Hindus, adopted Hindu manners. Muslim Kings and nobles observed the festivals of Divali, Shivratri and Holi with great pomp and splendour. In Delhi, Muslim nobles used to celebrate the festival of Basant, and used to wear Basanti (yellow) garments. The "Flower-Fair" of Delhi was a common festival of the Hindus and the Muslims until the time of Bahadur Shah.

If we turn from such externals to the cultural aspects of life, we find the same kind of fusion there. Let us consider the effort the Musalmans made for the evolution of a common culture in India. Take the question of

language which is of fundamental importance for it is the chief medium of expression of a people's intellect and spirit. Arabic is the sacred language of Islam, it was also the mother tongue of those early invaders who came to Sindh. It is not now the language of any group of Musalmans in India, although it is studied by the learned. Turkish was the spoken language of the Muslim conquerors from Central Asia, Persian, the language of the court from the beginning of the Muslim rule till its overthrow. Neither of these is today spoken by the Indian Muslims because the Muslims did not impose them on the Hindus. On the contrary, they adopted the Indian languages and enriched them with words drawn from their own. The Muslims of the Punjab speak Punjabi, of Bengal Bengali, of Gujrat Gujrati, in other words, they speak the dialect of the region where they reside, and there is no difference between them and the Hindus in their forms of speech. There is one language however regarding which there is much controversy today, namely Urdu. Urdu is not a Muslim language. It is not spoken in any of the countries where Islam is or has been the religion of the majority of the people. Urdu belongs to the Aryan branch of languages, its basic structure grammar and the greater part of its vocabulary is Indian. In fact the origin of the Urdu is the dialect which was spoken round about Delhi and which is known to linguists by the name of Khari Boli. It became the spoken dialect of the Musalmans also when they settled in and about Delhi. The spoken dialect evolved itself into a literary language and both Hindus and Musalmans have used it for centuries. Before the use of English among the educated classes Urdu was the *lingua franca* of India. The word 'Urdu', to my mind, is of Indian origin. It comes from "Urdh", a sanskrit word, which means compound mixture. Ghalib used this language in the same sense. Urdu language is indeed a compound mixture.

When poet Wali came to Delhi in the time of Emperor Mohammad Shah the language of the Deccan was called "Dakhani boli". On the other hand the Northern Indian language was called *Urdh ki boli*. The word Urdu there-

fore means language of the north. It is indeed a mixture. Of its 55,000 words vocabulary 42,000 are of purely Hindi stock and the remaining 13,000 belong to Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, English and other languages.

The Muslims took a prominent part in the development of other Indian languages. Punjabi, Eastern and Western Hindi and Bengali owe a great deal to the patronage of Muslim rulers and noblemen and to the devotion of Muslim writers. If these languages take legitimate pride in their literary wealth today the credit for it must be shared by both Hindus and Muslims. This is not the occasion for giving the names of Muslim writers in these languages, but the fact is so well-known to students of literary history that no one is likely to dispute its accuracy. Nor need it be pointed out that the literary products of Hindus and Muslims in these languages breath a common spirit. It is impossible for anyone to distinguish whether an Urdu poem is the composition of a Hindu or a Muslim. It is equally difficult to discover stylistic differences as such between the Hindu and Muslim authors of Hindi, Bengali and Punjabi prose and poetry. It is not the place to enumerate the services rendered by the Musalmans to Sanskrit and Hindi languages and literature. Suffice it to say that from Alberuni down to Syed Ali Belgrami interest in Sanskrit was not less than during the Gupta period. Who is not aware of the names of Khusro, Malik Muhammad Jaisi, Khan Khana, Kutban, Mulla Daud, Ras Khan, Muhammad Yaqub, Insha-Allah Khan, Nazir Akbarabadi and a host of others?

Yet the difference between the work of Muslim authors of Iran, Turkey, or Egypt and those of Muslim authors of India are marked. If one compares poems written in Persian by a Persian Muslim poet with poems written in Hindi, Bengali and Punjabi by an Indian Muslim poet the vast cultural gulf which separates them will be obvious. On the other hand, a comparison of poems in the Indian languages by Hindus with those written by Muslims will show great cultural affinity. This is because so far as language and literature are concerned the cultural fusion between Hindus and Muslims

had reached an advanced stage before the British established their dominion in India. The result was that a vast majority of the Muslims in India had adopted Indian languages for speaking and writing and had made considerable contribution towards the growth of literatures in them.

The effort to evolve a common culture in India was not confined to language and literature but included science, philosophy, and art. There was a great deal of mutual give and take in Mathematics, Astronomy, Geography, Medicine, Metaphysics, Ethics, etc. But the most interesting assimilation of the two cultures took place in the domain of art.

The Musalmans had developed a highly distinctive art before they appeared in India. But from the earliest days of the conquest they followed the policy of unification not exclusion. From the earliest architectural monuments of the thirteenth century to the buildings erected at the end of the eighteenth century one finds the same endeavour to combine the elements of Hindu and Muslim architecture.

Sir John Marshall, lately the Director of Indian Archaeological Department, says in the chapter on the monuments of Muslim India (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III):—

“In the fusion of the two styles which followed, Muhammadan architecture absorbed or inherited manifold ideas and concepts from the Hindu—so many indeed that there is hardly a form of motif of Indian architecture which in some guise or other did not find its way into the buildings of the conquerors. But more important than these borrowings of outward concrete features is the debt which Indo-Islamic architecture owes to the Hindus for two of its most vital qualities, the qualities of strength and grace. In other countries Islamic architecture has other merits. There is nothing in India, for instance, to match the green and gold mosaics of Jerusalem and Damascus or the superb-colouring of Persian tilework, or the wonderful fantasies of Spanish design; but in no other country are strength and grace

united quite so perfectly as in India. These are the two qualities which in architecture count more than all the other”.

It will be tedious to reproduce the remarks of Marshall regarding each one of the important monuments erected in the pre-Mughal time but one or two quotations may be given to illustrate the point.

The first Muslim building was the Mosque at Delhi known as Quwwat-ul-Islam erected by Qutubuddin Aibak in 911 A.D. This is how Marshall describes it, “Seen from within or without the building as originally designed presented an essentially Hindu appearance. Indeed, save for the five Mihrabs in the back wall, there was scarcely a feature in the whole building to proclaim its Muslim character”.

Firoz Shah Tughlaq, who came two hundred years after Qutubuddin, was a great builder. Historians give a long list of cities, forts, palaces, mosques, tombs, etc. which he raised. Regarding the developments in architecture during the Tughlaq period, it is said that Hindu influence had greatly waned under them. Yet “the architects who designed those Tughlaq buildings and the workmen who constructed them, though, perhaps of no exceptional skill, and though hampered by many restrictions had nevertheless been born and bred amid Indian surroundings and could not help expressing themselves in terms of Indian thought and thus too it happened that much of the mentality underlying and controlling the design was fundamentally Hindu. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the longer the Mohammadans remained in India the more deeply imbued did their art become with Indian feeling”.

The Mughal architecture is so well known that it is not necessary to dilate upon it here. The efforts of the Mughals culminated in the buildings of Akbar who created a distinctively Indian style, and even the Persianising tendencies of Shahjahan succeeded in giving only a temporary bias to the style so developed. In fact competent historians of architecture find in the monuments,

of Shahjahan a solid substratum of Indian elements behind the Persian facade.

If we accept the dictum that art is the expression of the soul of a people, then architecture aptly demonstrates that in the India of the Middle Ages one soul and one culture struggled to find utterance through this medium. There is no building, whether erected by the Muslims or by the Hindus from the 15th century onwards, whether its purpose was sacred or secular, which did not follow the new principles evolved in India through the joint efforts of Hindu craftsmen and their Muslim patrons. The palaces built at Gwalior by Raja Man Singh in the 15th century furnish some of the earliest examples of this Indo-Muslim style, the temples of Brindaban, the cenotaphs of Hindu princes and numerous other Hindu buildings scattered all over India, are characteristic of this new movement as are the palaces, tombs, mosques, etc., built by Muslim rulers, whether in Golkunda, Gujrat, Delhi, Bengal.

In the field of painting the same tendency became manifest. The ancient Hindu styles were developed along new lines by the Mughal emperors who brought artists from Central Asia and Persia to work in co-operation with Indian artists. Both Hindu and Muslim artists practised the new style and it is impossible to say by looking at a particular picture whether the artist was a Hindu or a Muslim. Branches of the new style were established in the regions ruled over by Hindu princes in Rajaputana, the Himalayan Hill States and Central India, as also in the principal centres ruled over by the Mughal governors who had established independent principalities. In both sets of centres the family resemblance between the schools is indubitable, in spite of local modifications of style. The same spirit of beauty, grace, romance and mysticism unites all the varied articulations of this new school.

Among the arts music occupies a most important position and the music of the Muslim artist is identical with that of the Hindu. There may be regional differences or differences between one school and another, but there

are no differences between "Hindu music" and "Muslim music". The Musalmans learnt the art of the Hindus and introduced new instruments, new forms and compositions, but the Hindus learnt these with eagerness, and it is impossible today to differentiate between them. In the arts of song and dance the fusion of the two cultures became perfect.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION—NO BARRIER TO UNITY

No account of culture is complete without reference to religion. Of the Muslim attitude towards religions other than their own a great deal of misunderstanding prevails on account of the false propaganda spread by their enemies—specially the early Christian writers. As a result the non-Muslim world has almost come to believe that Islam was a religion of violence and force, of uncompromising rigidity and bigotry. The facts, however, are otherwise.

There is no doubt that a section of the Muslim Ulema did look down upon other faiths as undeserving of the respect due to Islam but there were other learned men who attempted to understand them and to estimate their true value. Besides, there were many seekers after truth, travellers on the road to unity with God, and for these saintly men all religions were so many different ways of attaining the same goal. Among them were members of mystic orders, monastic establishments and poets who largely prescribed the religion which was followed by men of all ranks of life, rich and poor.

Long before Europe had learned to inquire about religion in a scientific and detached spirit many learned Muslims had compiled books of comparative religion in which they displayed an amazingly free and rationalistic attitude. Among them was that most eminent scholar Abu Raihan Albiruni who compiled a comprehensive treatise on Hindu religions and philosophies as early as the eleventh century.

Throughout the Middle Ages the Musalmans took enormous pains to acquaint themselves with the religious literature of the Hindus. They translated almost all the important texts into Persian and then afterwards in Urdu Vedas, Upanishads, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagwad

Gita, Dharma Sastras, Puranas, Yoga Vasistha, Yoga Sastras, Vedanta Sastras, etc.

Among later writers may be mentioned the names of Shaikh Ahmad Faruqi (1563-1624) who is famous as the Mujaddid-Alif-i-Sani (the reformer of the second millennium), and Mirza Mazhar Jan Janan (born 1699). This is what Mazhar wrote about the Hindu worship of idols:—

*But parasti-wa in amal moshabahate ba zikr
rabta darad ke mamul-e-sufia ust; was in monasibat
ba aquidae kuffar-e-Arab na darad ke anhan butan
ra motasarrif wa moussir bizzat mi guftund na
albutta tasarruf-e-Elahi.*

[Idol worship—the process is similar to the Zikr, (contemplative ritual) which is prescribed for Muslim Sufis. In this sense it has no relation with the faith of the Arabian unbelievers (Kafirs) because the latter believe the idols to possess power and influence in their own essence and not as instruments of divine power].

Mirza Mazhar had made a deep study of Hindu systems and he explained to his co-religionists the difference between the Hindu paths of salvation—Bhakti, Karma and Gyan.

What men of knowledge attempted to understand through intellectual discussion, men of feeling and emotion tried to assimilate and practise through direct and intuitive perception. Mahmud Shabistani (1317), the well-known writer of Gulshan-i-Raz, writing on the theme of idol worship explains the difference and similarity between it and Islam:—

1. *But inja muzhar-e-ishque ust wa wahdut,
Bowad zunnar bustan uqud-e-khidmat,*
2. *Cho kufr-o-din bowad quaem ba husti
Shawad tauheed ain-e-but parasti*
3. *Cho ushia hust husti ra mazahir
Azan jumla yake but bashud akhir*
4. *Musalman gur badaniste ke but chist
Ba danist-e-ke deen dar but parusti ust*

5. *Wa gur mushrik ze but agah gushta,
Kuja dar din-e-khud gumrah gushte*
6. *Nadid-u-uz but illa khulque zahir
Badin illut shud under share kafir*
7. *Tuhum gur zu nabinin huque pinhan
Bashare under nā khavandat musulman*

(The idol is the expression of love and unity in this work, and to wear the sacred thread is to take the resolve of service. As both faith and unfaith are founded on existence, unity of God is the essence of idol worship. As things are the expression of existence, one of them must at least be the idol. If the Muslim knew what the idol is, then he would understand that religion consists in idolatry. And if the worshipper understood the idol, he would not go astray in his faith. The latter did not see in the idol anything but external creation and for this reason he became Kafir in the eyes of law. If thou too will not see the Reality hidden in the idol, thou wilt also not be known as a Muslim according to the law).

Such quotations could be multiplied.

Numerous elements of Hindu worship were adopted by Muslim Sufis,—the rosary, the discipline of breath, yogic exercises, doctrines and tenets of Vedanta, etc. and many eclectic practices grew up among the Indian masses as a result of the contact of the two faiths. By deliberate efforts and unconscious processes the two religions became very much tolerant of one another and the Din-i-Ilahi of Akbar, whether right or wrong, was an endeavour to establish a common way of religious life for all.

The reformed sects founded by Kabir, Nanak, Dadu, Chaitanya, Tukaram, and a host of others, were successful attempts to spread among the Indian masses a religion which combined the best features of Hinduism and Islam.

Any one who studies the religious literature of the Middle Ages, whether produced by the Muslims or by the Hindus, will be struck by the broadness of vision which they display. The first and fervent thing which created the impressions of oneness between the Hindus and the Muslims was the promulgation of idea of Bhakti.

The religious awakening caused by the mutual reactions of Islam and Hinduism, influenced the Muslims also. The followers of Chaitanya were both Hindus and Muslims. The Husaini Pandits of Ajmer are to be found to this day. Almost all the tonets of the Lingayat sect have been borrowed from Islam. Ramanand, Kabir, Nanak and Tukaram considered the spiritual bases of Hinduism and Islam as one.

The fusion was so complete that technical terms in the beginning used in the Divine and Mystic problems of Islam were used by Hindu Saints and Bhagats. Both apparently came to realise that the underlying truths about religious life were the common property of all, whatever be the differences between dogmas, rites, ceremonies and the externalia of worship.

Both laid emphasis upon inward grace and made light of outward practices. Such an attitude towards religion made it possible for the followers of the two religions to live together in comparative amity and peace, and to reduce religious intolerance to the minimum.

The few outbursts of bigotry during a history of one thousand years are confined to the reigns of a handful of rulers, and even their persecutions had mixed motives and affected only certain classes of people.

That religious differences did not count for much is proved by many facts. For instance, it was possible for a Hindu to rise to the highest position under the Emperor, and for many Hindus to hold office among the ranks of the high mansabdars. In all the wars of the time the Hindus and Muslims never fought as such; there were always Hindu chiefs and captains on the side of the Muslim forces fighting against the Hindu rulers and princes and Muslim captains on the side of the Hindu rulers and princes, fighting against Muslim emperors and governors. Innumerable examples of devoted and loyal services rendered by the Hindus to their Muslim masters and allies and of equally devoted and loyal services by the Muslims to their Hindu masters and allies fighting against Muslims and Hindus can be adduced from the pages of history. Similarly, examples of Hindu treachery to

Hindus and of Muslim traitors and rebels turning against Muslim can be produced. The fact of the matter is that personal ties of loyalty were considered more binding in those times than community, religion or love of country. The two words which summed up this loyalty were "namak halal" and "namak haram" 'to be true to the salt', or 'to be false to the salt'. Nothing was regarded as more praiseworthy than the former and nothing as more despicable than the latter.

It must also be remembered that whatever the origin of the Muslim rulers in India, they had in fact made India their home. Babar might have come from Farghana and might sometimes have wistfully dreamed of returning to Samargand but he and his descendants became rooted in the soil of the country where destiny had brought them, and they renounced all interest beyond the frontiers where resided the enemies of their family, ever ready to pounce upon them to wrest their heritage. In such circumstances there is no wonder that they threw themselves wholeheartedly into the life of the people, took a sympathetic interest in their ways of living and manners, and participated heartily in their joys and sorrows.

The Moghul emperor had become such an indispensable part of the Indian social and political system that when in 1857 the first serious revolt against the rule of the British broke out, the name of the Moghul emperor became the rallying centre, in spite of the fact that the emperor himself exercised no power and owned no resources.

On the basis of facts relating to language, literature, science, philosophy, art and religion one might with justification hold that the Musalmans and the Hindus of India had evolved a common point of view, a common way of living, a common civilization during the long centuries of contact. On the basis of a common economic system they had built up the superstructure of a common mental and spiritual culture. At the time the British appeared upon the scene India had begun to show signs of division in its political structure, but she did not exhibit any division based upon religious, communal or cultural con-

siderations. In their outlook upon life, manners and morals, religious ideals, political and administrative methods, crafts and arts, Marathas, Rajputs, Sikhs and Jats, scarcely differed from other Indians, whether subject to the Moghul emperor or one of the semi-independent governors of a province. •

The truth is that our Society was then so firm and the ties of mutual affections were so strong that political upheavals did not create any gulf in the hearts, and the political strifes were never based on religion. These radiant lines in the Indian picture, these silent words of history whisper something to us and remind us of forgotten lessons of love and fidelity.

We cannot find in the history of the Hindu Muslim relations in the Middle Ages much justification for the present day jealousies and suspicions. On the contrary, we see how the wise statesmanship of the Muslim rulers, their broadminded patronage of art and learning and their keen desire to understand Hindu customs and manners and to share in Hindu ways of life led to appreciation and adoption in part of the Hindu way of life.

On the other hand, the ancient Hindu spirit of tolerance and of search after unity in diversity made an equally generous response to the advances of Islam. The result was that the Muslims shed much that was foreign to India from their culture and while leaving the impress of their own genius upon India were assimilated to its peculiar modes of life.

Such was the social and cultural contact which the medieval Indian rulers had established between the two communities. They lived a life of peace and harmony in spite of their religious differences.

Even as late as 1815 an authoritative document like Hamilton's Gazetteer records, "The two religions have existed together so long that the professor of both acquired a habit of looking on each other with a toleration and indulgence unusual in other countries".

Lord William Bentick, Governor-General of India, comparing the Muslim with the British rule writes thus:

"In many respects the Muhammadans surpassed our rule, they settled in the country which they conquered, they intermixed and intermarried with the natives; they admitted them to all privileges; the interests and sympathies of the conquerors with the conquered became identified. Our policy, on the contrary, has been the reverse of this—cold, selfish and unfeeling"¹

CHAPTER VI

REVIVAL OF COMMUNAL CULTURE UNDER BRITISH RULERS

Let us consider the root causes of the distrust which destroyed the cultural unity that had been achieved during medieval times in India. The process of the revival of separatist cultural tendencies, spread over about a century, had already created mutual suspicions. But one fact is clear.

It has been possible for interested parties to play the two great communities of India against each other. After 1923 the Muslim community had increasingly accepted the lead of more and more intransigent leaders. What is the explanation of this phenomenon ?

Communalism is based on fear and suspicion. Those who have sought to win the leadership of their communities have largely played upon these two emotions. Here are typical expressions of this :

A Muslim leader of great eminence says, "any attempt at the amalgamation at the present stage would mean the submergence of an ill-organised, badly equipped and badly trained minority under a majority vastly superior in numbers, and immensely better organised. No one acquainted with the social, religious and moral conditions of the Muslims can view such a contingency without the gravest misgivings".

Sir Gokalchand Narang says, "they (Hindus) also realise that placing the Muslims on terms of equality with the rest of the population would mean absolute Muslim domination, as they know that the Muslims are united, or are atleast capable of uniting when opposed to non-Muslims for their protection and advancement of their community's interests, while the rest of the population would be split up into various groups and would not be able to present a united front against Muslim aggression".

The fears and suspicions which are reflected in these quotations from two eminent and respected leaders of the two communities are the result of the estrangement which has taken place between them during the course of the 19th century. That these fears did not haunt the minds of the communities up to the end of the 18th century is made clear by the attitude which the Muslim divines expressed towards the Hindu rule.

Nor in spite of the existence of two different religions were any deep cultural differences to be seen between them. As has been mentioned already, both Hindus and Muslims shared equally in the development of Hindi and Urdu and took pleasure in the study of one another's religion, philosophy and science. Their arts were common and they had no prejudices in regard to participation in the fairs and festivals of each. They spoke the same language, wore similar clothes, furnished their houses in the same style, had similar outlook upon the life of this world—if not of the next—and their industry and commerce, urban and rural occupations were parts of one economic system.

Unfortunately the appearance of a third party broke up this cultural unity, and tendencies which were fostered for political ends led them to organise themselves in separate camps. The introduction of Western education and the emphasis put upon the study of English resulted in the neglect of the study of the language, literature, science and philosophy of the one by the other. Hindu youths were brought up to study European arts and sciences with a little smattering of Hindi or Sanskrit and the Muslim youth Urdu, Persian or Arabic. The number of Hindus and Muslims who studied both the Hindu and Muslim languages and literatures gradually dwindled, mutual understanding diminished, and estrangement grew.

While in the Middle Ages under Muslim rule, Hindu and Muslim reformers had led movements of religious and moral purifications concerned with both communities, the reformers of the 19th century were exclusive. The appeals of the former group was always universal while the

appeals of the latter group were sectarian. For example, compare Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, Dadu, Rajjab, Baba Farid, Shaikh Nooruddin, Nizamuddin Aoulia and others with Hindu and the Muslim revivalist leaders of modern times.

The medieval religious leaders cared essentially for the substance and the reality of religion and deprecated emphasis upon external acts, doctrines and dogmas; on the other hand the modern reformers have been concerned chiefly with the outer forms and tenets of religion rather than its inner emotional and spiritual content. The first treated the word of the scriptures without undue awe, for their minds were free and their spirit adventurous, the latter circumscribed themselves within the narrow ambit of its word and concerned themselves largely with their meaning and interpretation. Inevitably the exclusiveness of the one has reacted upon the other.

Three factors were responsible for the growth of separate communal consciousness. In the first place, Indian cultural unity was based upon the socio-political integration achieved by the Moghul Empire. Its break up removed a powerful force making for unity.

Secondly, British dealing with the conquered accentuated the differences between them. Influential sections among the conquerors distrusted the Musalmans and despised the Hindus for a long time. They sought to crush the one and to patronise the other, and the two reacted differently to this treatment.

Thirdly, the Christian missionaries and British officials, who sympathised with them and promoted their cause, endeavoured to win the Hindus to their faith in order to make them loyal supporters of their rulers. The writings and speeches of Wilberforce, Charles Grant, Marshman, Duff and others amply bear out this statement. In a letter which Macaulay wrote to his father in 1836, he remarked as follows:—

“The effect of this education on the Hindus is prodigious. No Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion.

Some continue to profess it as a matter of policy, but many profess themselves pure deists and some embrace Christianity. It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed up there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence”.

Sir Charles Trevelyan, brother-in-law of Macaulay, in a paper, which he submitted to the Parliamentary Committee, narrates his experience in different parts of India and points out the contrast between Bengal and the regions where English education has not penetrated. In the first “high and low, rich and poor had only one idea of improving their political condition. The upper classes lived upon the prospect of regaining their former pre-eminence; and the lower, upon that of having the avenue to wealth and distinction re-opened to them by the re-establishment of a native government. In Bengal instead of thinking of cutting the throats of the English, they were aspiring to sit with them on the grand jury or on the bench of the magistrates”.

In the same paper he relates to the advantages of spreading English education among the Hindus in these words:—

“The spirit of English literature on the other hand, cannot but be favourable to the English connection. Familiarly acquainted with us by means of our literature, the Indian youth almost cease to regard us as foreigners. They speak of our great men with the same enthusiasm as we do. Educated in the same way, interested in the same objects, engaged in the same pursuits with ourselves they become more English than Hindus, just as the Roman provincials became more Roman than Gauls and Italians..... So far from having the idea of driving the English into the sea uppermost in their minds, they have no notion of any improvement but such as rivets their connection with the English and makes them dependent on English protection and instruction”.

Other cultural activities undertaken by the British officially and unofficially served the same purpose. Sir

William Jones, Horace Hayman Wilson, Prinsep and other oriental scholars established the Asiatic Society and pursued researches in ancient languages. They unrolled before the minds of susceptible Hindu youth wonderful pictures of an ancient Hindu society which in contrast with the misery and wretchedness, corruption and degradation of contemporary life appeared to belong to golden age of mankind.

Other Oriental scholars like the historian Sir Henry Elliot proved that the age which followed the Hindu period of Indian History was one of unmitigated oppression and bigotry, from which the Hindus were rescued by the benign intervention of the British. Hindu youngmen, who learned these lessons in the colleges established for their regeneration and advancement acquired a sense of holy horror against the Musalmans and began to look upon the establishment of British rule as the result of a divine dispensation.

While India owes a deep debt of gratitude to English history, language and literature, the fact remains that the teaching of Indian history in our schools and colleges for about a century produced different effects on Hindu and Muslim youths. It created a feeling of revenge in the minds of Hindu youths while a sense of arrogance in Muslim youths. Both these feelings continued to react on each other. Several generations grew up in this atmosphere. The result should, therefore, cause no surprise.

In the Fort William College, Calcutta, Indian languages received special encouragement. There the raw youngmen who were sent out from England to administer the affairs of this country acquired a knowledge of Indian languages in this college. The authorities of the college desired that books should be prepared in these languages for the benefit of these officers. The language of the Courts then was Persian, but Persian was confined to a small circle, and the language most commonly known in Northern India was Urdu. It was the language of polite speech among Hindus and Muslims and it was used both in prose and poetry, while Brij Bhasa was the medium of

poetry only. Gilchrist, the Principal of the college, in the opening years of the nineteenth century, sent for scholars of Urdu to compile the text books.

Then it struck them that that was not enough. In the words of Mr. F. E. Keay, "Urdu, however, had a vocabulary borrowed largely from the Persian and Arabic languages, which were specially connected with Muhammadanism (not correct). A literary language for Hindi speaking people which could commend itself more to Hindus was very desirable and the result was obtained by taking Urdu and expelling from it words of Persian and Arabic origin, and substituting for them words of Sanskrit and Hindi origin".

Thus a new literary language was brought into existence which had not been used till 1800 either for purposes for prose or poetry even by the Hindus, and the seeds of Urdu and Hindi controversy were sown. The Christian missionaries accentuated the linguistic differences.

According to Sir G. A. Grierson, the greatest authority on Indian languages, "unfortunately the most powerful English influence has during this period been on the side of Sanskritists. The Sanskritised Hindi has been largely used by missionaries and translation of the Bible has been made into it. The few Indian writers who have stood up for the use of Hindi undefiled have had small success in the face of so potent an example of misguided effort".

The Hindi so inaugurated had little success till 1857. Then the British hatred of Muslims and their culture attained extremes of ferocity. Persian had ceased to be the language of Courts in 1837. Urdu was still regarded as the *lingua franca* of India and the Delhi College, which was established in 1829 to impart Western education through the medium of Urdu, rendered great service through translations of English scientific and philosophic works into Urdu. But the College was closed during the dark days of 1857.

Now many British administrators took up the cause of Hindi which had made little progress so far. Articles

were written in newspapers advocating its cause, grammars of the Hindi language were compiled, text books for schools were prepared, and demands that Hindi should be recognised as Court language were advanced. The Hindus swallowed that bait. Although such an eminent writer as Bhartendu Harishchandra recognised, so late as 1871, that "the speech of the Agarwalas of both their men and women, is Khari Boli or Urdu", a tearing and raging propaganda was started in favour of Hindi.

Sir George Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, announced in 1872 his resolve to stop the use of Urdu in the Courts of Bihar and its teaching in the schools of the Province. In 1882, the Hindus pressed the cause of Hindi before the Education Commissioner, but Dr. Hunter, the Chairman disregarded their request. In 1900 the Government of the United Provinces admitted the claim of the Hindus and sanctioned the use of Hindi language and script in the Courts. Thus the gulf between the Hindus and Musalmans was widened. While the advent of the Musalmans in India had resulted in the fusion of the Hindu-Muslim cultures, the advent of the British rule wrought about antagonism and disruption.

Since 1900 modern Hindi has made large strides and developed a considerable literature, but this progress has been accompanied by growing hostility towards the Musalmans. If we contrast this with the advance which medieval Hindi had made during Mughal times, an advance more glorious than that of modern Hindi, and achieved through the willing co-operation of the Musalmans who enthusiastically adopted its cause and rendered invaluable services to it,—we can see the difference between spontaneous progress based on good-will and an artificial stimulation or imposition resulting in antagonism.

Is it not tragic that while throughout the long period of Muslim rule in India no controversy ever arose over the question of language, for sometime past this very question has been a cause of bitter discord between the two communities? Even Aurangzeb, generally regarded as a bigot, had no prejudices in the matter of language. It is

stated in one of his letters that when two new varieties of mango were brought before him and he was asked to name them, he chose Hindi names—Ras-anavilas (joy of tongue) and Sudha rasa (ambrosial juice).

Muslims explain their present attitude towards Hindi by saying that they are not opposed to the Hindi language as such, as is evident from their past association with it, but they are opposed to the anti-national motive lying behind the present move.

CHAPTER VII . .

19TH CENTURY REVIVALISM FOSTERED SEPARATISM IN INDIA

Over and above the three factors which we have discussed above, namely, the overthrow of the Indian State, the political policy of the British rulers to balance the Indian communities against one another, and the powerful support which they gave to separatist cultural movements, there is another cause which has profoundly disturbed the relations between Hindus and Muslims and has fostered separatism—the revivalist movement.

Although “revivalism” is a delusion and a snare, communities in certain periods of their history do fall into its grip. Hindus and Musalmans have both succumbed to it in the fond though wholly mistaken belief that they could make the stream of time flow backwards and recapture the spirit, the customs and institutions of an age that is past.

The Hindus were the first to come under the sway of revivalism. While the impact of the conquering West made them conscious of their moral decadence, the Western Orientalists made them aware of a remote past which was pleasingly different from the present and the recent past, the stress of political forces raised in them the desire to improve their lot and they began to entertain the belief that they could do so in isolation from and at the expense of other Indian communities.

Thus it happened that from the first the movements of social, moral and religious reform instead of following in the footsteps of medieval pioneers like Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and Tukaram began to seek, inspiration in the ancient past. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the first of these reformers, was a man of great learning, a scholar of Sanskrit and of Persian and Arabic. He turned his attention to the ancient Hindu scriptures and placed before the community the ideals enshrined in the Vedas and Upani-

shads. He did this with the best of motives but later on Raja Radhakant Dev and Bankim Chatterjee turned it into wrong channels.

Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, who was sorely troubled with the spectacle of bright Hindus embracing Christianity, appealed from the corrupt forms of religion prevalent in his times to the purer and more exalted religion contained in the same ancient works of the Hindu sages. Keshab Chandra Sen was more catholic, but he tried to reconcile Hindu Vaishnavism with Christian unitarianism.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, preached with the whole strength of his soul the gospel of "back to the Vedas and all that it implies". The Theosophical Society under the lead of Col. Olcott, Madam Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant applied Western science to the justification of the Hindu customs and institutions and traced them to the Puranas and other sacred texts.

Paramhansa Ram Krishna had certainly spent years in seeking religious fellowship with the Muslims in their mosques and with the Christians in their Churches, but his great disciple Swami Vivekanand laid emphasis on the modes of life and worship contained in the Darshanas and specially the Vedanta.

Thus almost every one of the great leaders harked back to the India of Pre-Muslim times, and revived the memories of a past seen not with the blind eyes of intellect but through the haze of emotional thought.

Hindu revivalism and Christian antagonism led to similar results among the Muslims. Muslim preachers and reformers drew attention to the simplicity and austerity of the first followers and successors of the Prophet and denounced the softness and corruption of the Muslims of later times.

By the time we reach the end of the 19th century the Hindus had succeeded in enveloping their minds with lofty visions of a splendid past, an imaginary and idealised past, which terminated immediately after the sages of the forest had completed their treatises on philosophy

and religion. Some of the Muslims likewise harkened back to the ascetic purity of their earliest history and began to regard later cultural admixture as an evil.

Efforts to revive the purity of their early religious life did not stop there; they could not possibly be confined within any arbitrary limits,* once they had been set afoot. Naturally revivalism in religion led to a hankering for the revival of the entire structure of life—social, economic, political and cultural, as it was lived in those ages when men seemed so pious, so righteous, so God-fearing.

The great national upheaval which commenced in India in 1905 produced leaders like Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. Each one of them was a staunch revivalist in one form or another. Tilak drew his inspiration from the history of Maratha achievements. He revived the Ganapati festival and Shivaji worship and compiled a commentary on the Gita. Lajpat Rai was an eloquent propagator of the Arya Samaj doctrines, and Aurobindo Ghosh put the teaching of Shri Krishna in the hands of the revolutionary youth of Bengal. For him Vyas, Valmiki and Kalidas were the three exponents of the Hindu mind whose works enshrined most adequately the history of the Indian civilisation.

Many young Muslims were also swept into the national movement. Among them was Mohammad Iqbal. As the teachings of Iqbal have profoundly influenced the mind of Muslim India and as his views have aroused great controversy in these days, it will not be out of place to consider the evolution of his mind.

In the beginning Iqbal was a pure nationalist burning with zeal for the progress of the whole Indian nation. He poured the volcanic fervour of a patriotic heart into the strangely fascinating moulds of his poetry. His poems, "Naya Shivala", "Hindustan Hamara", "Rama", "Gaettri", and others moved the Hindus and the Muslims equally. His songs spread from house to house and village to village till they were on the tongues of vast multitudes in Northern India.

• But then came a change. The first flush of national enthusiasm passed away and the phase of reflective thought supervened. At this stage the current of his thought was influenced by two forces.

In the first place the revivalist tendencies among the Hindus affected him greatly. The nationalism associated with the partition of Bengal had laid emphasis upon the iniquity of breaking up the unity of the educated class in Bengal, in other words the Hindu intelligentsia was, therefore, coloured with strong sentiments of Hindu resurgence. In this atmosphere what happened may best be described in the words of Bipin Chandra Pal.

“If the Muslim leaders tried to wipe out the memories of the Sikhs and the Marathas, the Hindu nationalist leaders sought to revive them. It was no doubt a supreme psychological need of nationalist propaganda, and, as far as these memories were revived to create the self confidence of a people suffering from a state of hopeless and listless inertia, they did only good and no harmIt gradually awoke, at least in a section of the nationalist, the foolish and suicidal ambition of once more re-establishing either a single Hindu state or a confederacy of Hindu states in India. Some people, thus, secretly interpreted Swaraj as Hindu Raj”.

In his great disappointment Iqbal turned to the other stream along which flowed the ideas which had far flung affiliation in the world of Islam. The Philosophy of Jala-luddin Rumi and the stirring ideas of Jamaluddin Afghani and Sheikh Mohammad Abdah and the leaders of the Turkish revolution who urged the Musalmans all over the world to shake off the domination of the West and revive the glories of the times when the conquering flood of Islam had overspread Asia and Europe.

Iqbal thereupon placed all the resources of an imaginative and philosophic mind at the service of Muslim revivalism. For over a quarter of a century the spell of his magic verse and pungent thought affected powerfully the ideas of his community. It did one important service, the Musalman awoke from his torpor and shed his inferiority complex. It placed before him the ideal of a

world-wide society linked up by religious ties and freed from the bonds of territorial patriotism. The revivalism of the renaissance in Bengal had its natural reaction in promoting the revivalism of Islam. The growing estrangement of the communities thus received a powerful stimulus.

Towards the end of his life, when the lengthening shadows of death began to fall upon him and the blazing heat of the noon-tide of revivalism had abated, one sees that the smouldering embers of the nationalism of his youth had sparked again into life.

In his later poetry, he appeals pathetically to his Hindu countrymen to obliterate the distinction of "the self" and "the other", if they desired to end the slavery of the country, for in love alone is hidden the secret of freedom. How can the Muslims build their nest on branch of roses if they are to live in the garden a degraded life?

*Yeh isthaghna hai pani men nagan rakhta hai
saghar ko*

*Tujhe bhi chahye misle hubabe a'b joo rahna
Banayen keya samajhkar shakul gul par ashian apna
Chaman men a'h rahna jo ho be abru rahna*

*Jo tu samjhe to azadi hai poshida mohabbat men
Ghulami hai asir-e-imtiaz ma wa tu rahna*

*Na rah apnon se begana isi men khair hai teri
Agar manzur duniya men hai o begana khu rahna*

And again:

*Ae Himala ae Attock ae rud gang
Zistan ta ke chunan be ab-o-rang*

Pir mardan az ferasat be nasib

Naujawan az mohabbat be nasib

Sharq o Gharb azado man nakhchireghair

Khist man sarmayaetamir ghair

Zindegani bar murade digran

Jawedan marg ast ne khabe giran

Hindiyan ba yek digar awekhtand

Fitnahai kohna baz angekhand

*Kas nadanad jalwae ab az sarab
Inqalab, ae inqalab, ae inqalab*

Then again :

*Jafar az bangal wa sadiq as daccan
Nang adam nang din nange watan
Na qabulo wa naumido wa namurad
Milte az kar shane andar fasad
Alamman az ruh jafar alamman
Alamman az jafarane yin zaman*

In one of his last collection of verses, viz., Zarb-e-Kalim, he puts the following patriotic line in the month of "The Ray of Hope":

*Chorungi na main hind ki tarik feza ko
Jab tak na uthen khab se mardan-e-giran khab
Khawar ki umidon ka yehi khak hai markaz
Iqbal ke ashkon se yehi khak hai sairab
Is khak se uthe hain woh ghawaz ma'ani
Jin ke liye har bahar pur ashob hai payab*

Such is the burning patriotic fervour of the man towards the end of his life. But hidden current of disappointment runs through these lines.

There is no denying the fact that this caused much harm to the national cause. The fiery torch of Iqbal had no doubt lit up the smoky communalist brands. And tongues of communal fire leapt all round menacing and fearsome. If Dr. Kurtakoti, the Sankaracharya of Karvir Pith and President of the Hindu Mahasabha, affirmed that "In Hindustan the national race, religion and language ought to be that of the Hindus", the Muslim League flung back the angry retort that it will rend this "Hindustan" into pieces and build out of them a Pakistan which will so far as possible remain free from the domination of the Hindu race, religion and language.

By the steps which we have traced, the heritage which had been built up in the course of more than half a millennium by a process of mutual give and take, has already been squandered during less than a century. It is indeed supremely tragic.

The leaders of thought in India and Pakistan should now reflect over this and try to arrest the process. Cultural unity will solve many political and social problems of both countries. Pakistan cannot solve her economic and financial problems without the help of the Hindus, India needs the services of Musalmans for her defence and foreign relation; they could form a link between India on one side and Western Asiatic and North African countries on the other.

Luckily in India we have leaders who can think and see far ahead of their time. Let us hope this appeal to them to revive and strengthen the cultural unity will not go in vain.

CHAPTER VIII

HINDU-MUSLIM RELATIONS

THE 19TH CENTURY AND AFTER

It is our melancholy task now to turn from the pleasant aspect of Hindu-Muslim relations to trace the history of the growth of estrangement and bitterness during the 19th century and after, and to lay bare the causes which are responsible for the existence of the painful state of affairs prevalent today.

There is no doubt that the British conquest of India dealt a severe blow to the cultural unity of India. The conquest naturally shattered the economic structure, the social system and the political organisation of India. With the disruption of the societal basis of culture, culture itself was shaken to its foundations. New forces and factors were introduced into our life which added to our difficulties and rendered the task of rebuilding our society more complicated.

It must be remembered that in the period before the British conquest, our society like others consisted of two classes, one which led and the other which followed. The first was formed of several groups; men of learning and of religion (Pandits and Maulavis, Saints and Sadhus), men of affairs and owners of landed property (Military and civil servants of the state and Zamindars), men of wealth (Bankers, merchants, masters of guilds, etc.). The second class was composed of artisans, craftsmen, peasants, workmen.

Devotion to learning and knowledge, service to the state and possession of property endowed men with a privileged status in society, but privilege carried with it the responsibility of political and cultural leadership. The builders of medieval civilization came from the ranks of these groups. But the British conquest of India led to their ruin.

The introduction of western education created a revolution. The men of old learning lost their vital and organic relation with the society and became degraded and parasitical. The new intelligentsia which arose in their place imbibed ideals which created a gulf between them and the mass of their countrymen. This uprooted class was long out of sympathy with the traditions of Indian life and looked upon apish imitation of the West as the be-all and end-all.

The class of political, social leaders, hereditary state servants and landholders, was destroyed with the overthrow of political power. Their sons who escaped became in general demoralized and lived corrupt and idle lives, rendering little service for the property they held. These hereditary functionless property-owners, bereft of the spirit of adventure, became staunch supporters of the new political order, because it guaranteed them a life of ease, without ambition for power or fame.

The men of wealth were ruined by business passing into the hands of the British merchants and by the British policy of strangling the trade and industry of Indians so that India might become a vast colony for the supply of raw materials to Britain and competition between India and England might be eliminated.

But the worst effect of the conquest was the destruction of the people's organic unity. The several communities inhabiting the country who had evolved a common way of life, had become interdependent. While each group or caste followed its own pursuits, it was a member of the whole. By differentiation of functions, they avoided competition and conflict and achieved integration of social structure. Religion did not hinder this.

The British conquest broke up this structure. With the transfer of power and the concentration of authority and patronage in British hands, the mutual dependence of the communities lost its purpose and the groups began to drift apart. A conqueror's success depends upon the weakness and disunity of the conquered, the continuity of his power depends upon the perpetuation of this. 'Divide and rule' is an ancient and well tried maxim of

statecraft. One quotation here from Sir John Maynard in the "Foreign Affairs" will do:—

"It is of course true that the British authority could not have established and could not now maintain itself but for a fissiparous tendency of which Hindu-Muslim antagonism is one manifestation. It is also true that the mass rivalry of the two communities began under British rule".

Thus the inner tendencies which had facilitated the overthrow of Indian society received a fresh impetus and the Indian people became a disorganized mass of heterogeneous groups.

The history of India during the 19th century shows two forces at work. On the one hand, India's economic life ceased to be medieval, self-sufficient and static. The working of the world forces and the introduction of modern techniques of industry made India a single economic unit, struggling to organise itself on a national basis and to break down the self-sufficiency and immobility of the rural regions and hereditary group organizations. This development demanded corresponding changes in our social structure and political system, and provided the driving force behind movements for social and political advance.

It is true that the economic development did not receive such support from the alien government which in fact sought to thwart it so that it did not acquire the momentum attained in Western Europe during the same century.

Political and cultural forces were so manoeuvred as to tend to perpetuate the disorganisation of society and to strengthen the centrifugal tendencies.

PAST AND PRESENT

Let us consider the said history of these affairs, for under the stress of the present we are apt to forget that it is the product of the past. British policy from the beginning of their rule in India was directed by a desire to maintain their power. The lines of cleavage between group and group and community and community were

sharpened by showing favours first to the one and then to the other, playing upon their greed for jobs, and arousing mutual jealousies. In a shortsighted desire for relief from poverty and unemployment, the groups and communities played into the rulers' hands.

The British conquest of India involved at the outset conflict with Muslim princes and governors. Musalmans were therefore regarded as rivals and became the principal object of hostility. Much was done to repress them, to destroy their influence and wealth. Doors to power and riches were shut to them. In the previous regime they had enjoyed jagirs of land, for rendering services to the state in the army and in the revenue departments. Their learned men had been employed in the judiciary and had received royal patronage. Under the British, these sources of income and advancement were practically closed to them.

The Hindus in contrast were treated with favour. Large tracts of land passed into their hands, government services—such as were open to members of the subject race—were filled mainly by them; and they became apt and willing instruments of their masters.

The Muslim sulked, and remained aloof and suspicious. They non-co-operated with the government which in its turn tried to repress them. As late as January 1843 even the then Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough, burst forth: "I cannot close my eyes to the belief that this race (Muslim) is fundamentally opposed to us and, therefore, our true policy is to conciliate the Hindus".

But the British never lost a chance of making use of the Muslims for their own purposes. About 1832 when Moulana Syed Ahmad of Rai Bareilly began to preach a holy war against the Sikhs every facility was given to him and his followers to collect funds and raise men in British India to conduct the war against Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who was an avowed friend and ally of the British. But no sooner had the Sikh power been destroyed and the Punjab annexed, than the followers of

Moulana Syed Ahmad were persecuted, imprisoned, exiled, or executed. . . .

THE MUTINY AND AFTER

This trouble was not over when the upheaval of 1857 broke out, and the Muslims were held responsible for it. To old suspicions new causes of wrath were thus added. Muslims were crushed with vengeance. They have perhaps not yet recovered intellectually and economically from the effect of that repression. Sir William Hunter wrote in 1868: "The British turned upon the Musalmans as their real enemies. So that the failure of the revolt was much more disastrous to them than the Hindus". Then again, "the Muslims are excluded from the army and the law. The judiciary was either Anglicised or Hinduised. "It was even declared in the Government Gazette that no one but the Hindus should be given Government posts.....It seemed that High Government officials do not even recognise the existence of the Muslims and the result of this attitude was that in 1869 there was hardly a single office in Calcutta in which a Musalman could get any service except as a peon, a daftari or a postman" (vide Sir William Hunter's *Our Indian Musalmans*).

Such was the wrath of the British. But the more they were persecuted the more disloyal and bitter they seemed to become. At last widespread movements in Bengal, Bihar, and the upper provinces opened the eyes of some of the British Administrators and the murder by a Muslim in 1873 of Lord Mayo, the Governor-General, shocked them into new ways of dealing with the problem. The policy of repression had failed: the policy of reconciliation must be given a trial.

Indications of difference in the affections of the masters aroused the jealousy of the Hindus. Their newspapers published long articles upon the unwisdom of trying to reconcile the irreconcilables. Here began an abiding cause of distrust and suspicion. Many Muslim leaders who had strong nationalist tendencies became separatists. But the mild and loyal Bengali Hindu was be-

ginning to forget that he owed his rise to the favours of his rulers. He began to protest against the iniquities of the white indigo planters, to claim the right of trying white criminals and offenders, and to agitate for high posts and emoluments.

In the Deccan the smouldering embers of discontent were fanned into a flame by the activities of the Maratha Brahmans of Poona. Conspiracies were discovered in 1862, insurrections were apprehended, and dacoities broke out. In the Punjab the Kukas (a Sikh sect), who were prominently protectors of the cow, rose in rebellion and were put down with much severity.

To counteract the rising tide of opposition, the Government adopted a number of measures, whose underlying principle was to balance groups against one another. The old aristocratic class of Taluqdars, Zamindars and Jagirdars was rallied by throwing open and restricting to them the membership of the newly constituted Legislative Council and by conferring on them honorary magistracies. Attempts were made to isolate their youth in new exclusive institutions like the Mayo College at Ajmer.

Another measure was the reconstitution of the army. The pre-Mutiny army of the Bengal command had a preponderance of Brahmans and Rajputs, and the Madras and Bombay commands consisted of regiments of Tamils, Telugus and Marathas. After the Mutiny, mixed regiments were broken up and class regiments were recruited. Brahmans and Rajputs began to disappear; Hindustanis, Madrasis and Marathas were reduced and Pathans, Gurkhas, Sikhs and Punjabis took their place.

CHAPTER IX

MUSLIM REVIVAL AFTER MUTINY

The trump card which the British used to counter the growing influence of the Hindu intelligentsia was the reversal of the policy towards the Musalmans. The Hindu educated class had lately shown signs of intransigence. After the Ilbert Bill controversy they had founded political associations in different parts of the country.

Hindu reformist movements such as the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj and the Theosophical Society were strengthening racial pride and fostering self-assertion. "The passionate claim of the European to predominance was to be answered by the passionate claim of the Indian to equality". The Indian National Congress had sprung into existence. Disaster loomed large in the horizon. In order to avert it every endeavour had been made to prevent the Musalman from co-operating with the Hindus.

Some of the Hindu writers, chiefly Bengalis and Marathas, made propaganda in their novels and dramas against the Musalmans whom they painted as "obnoxious and tyrannical foreigners". Their hidden and real purpose seemed to be to attack the English rulers but they felt they could not do so openly and, instead, they made the Muslim institutions and Muslims rule the target. Such writings had an equally unfortunate, though opposite effect on both the communities. They generated a dislike of Musalmans amongst Hindus and made Muslims deeply resentful of this unkindness on the part of their fellow countrymen and suspicious of Hindu intentions.

Sir William Hunter sounded in his book, published in 1870, the first note of warning. Mr. James O'Kinealy, the officer in charge of Wahabi prosecutions, wrote a series of articles drawing the attention of the Government to the problem. "I attribute the great hold which Wahabi doctrines have on the mass of the Muhammadan peasantry to our neglect of their education". Mr. E. C. Bayley,

Secretary to the Government of India in the Home Department, analysing the causes of Muslim discontent pointed to the need of reconciling them, and remarked, "from the highest official to the lowest and no one has penetrated into the wrongs of the Musalmans more deeply than the present Viceroy (Lord Mayo), there is now a firm conviction that we have failed in our duty to the Muhammadan subjects of the Queen". In a memorandum which the Governor-General drew up, he laid down the following points in regard to the education of the Musalmans:—

(1) A Muhammadan is not a gentleman until he has acquired a certain amount of Arabic and Urdu learning, (2) he will not come to a Hindu school to be taught by a Hindu teacher, (3) we must, therefore, give way somewhat to their national prejudices and allow Arabic, Persian and Urdu a more prominent place in many of our schools and examination tests.

"In avowedly English schools established in Muhammadan districts the appointment of qualified Muhammadan English teachers might with advantage be encouraged assistance might justly be given to Muhammadans by grants-in-aid to create schools of their own".

Lord Mayo hoped that "a resolution of this kind would be justified by the circumstances of the case, and would have an excellent effect on the feelings of the Muhammadan population at this moment".

The desire to "have the Muhammadan youth educated upon our own plan" (Hunter) was at last given effect to. In 1882 an education commission which Dr. Hunter (as he then was) presided over reviewed the situation and on the basis of its report a comprehensive resolution was adopted by the Government in 1885 to foster general Muslim education.

HAPPENINGS AT ALIGARH

Meanwhile, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had created an educational centre for the Musalmans at Aligarh. The M.A.O. College there soon developed into a centre of Muslim social and political life. But the repression of

1857 had so greatly frightened the community that it was afraid of doing anything which might displease the English rulers. The Muslims abdicated control of Aligarh to sympathetic British Principals, who became virtually the leaders of community in all political matters and its philosophers, friends and guides for the next quarter of a century.

Mr. Beck discharged this function very successfully. The attitude of the Hindu Press which opposed even the minor concession which the English rulers wanted to bestow on the Muslims, upon whom the doors of Government patronage and preferment had been shut since the overthrow of Muslim rule caused disappointment to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and perhaps this played into the hands of the Principal.

Before his arrival at Aligarh, Sir Syed was a staunch supporter of all Indian National demands. The grand historic reception which he gave to Surendranath Banerji at Aligarh and his speech on that occasion amply prove his natural inclination at that time. Later he was somehow converted into the most formidable opponent of the newly started Indian National Congress. Under his lead a large group of Indian Musalmans became hostile to the Congress. In 1888, the United Indian Patriotic Association was founded. It consisted of all those Hindus and Musalmans who opposed the Congress. In 1893 a purely communal organisation was brought into existence, viz., the Muhammadan Defence Association and Mr. Beck became its Secretary. Thus the seed of separation was sown.

Mr. (afterwards Sir) Theodore Morrison who succeeded Mr. Beck kept the Musalmans out of political agitation. During his regime efforts were made, under Lord Curzon's inspiration, to divert the attention of the Muslims from India. Agents were sent to countries like Persia to induce their wealthy youth to come to Aligarh for education.

THE AGHA KHAN'S DEPUTATION

Mr. Archibald, the next Principal, played a very important part in Muslim politics during his period of office from 1905 to 1910. When he arrived in Aligarh India

was seething with agitation against the measures of Lord Curzon. The Government was concerting means for rallying the moderate and loyal elements and for striking down the agitators. Among them was the contemplated expansion of the Indian councils. Mr. Archibald became the medium between the Government of India and the Muslim leaders. He met the Private Secretary of the Viceroy at Simla and settled with him that a deputation of the Muslims should wait upon the Viceroy and present an address asking for separate representation in the new constitution.

The history of the deputation led by H. H. the Agha Khan and its results are well known. In the words of Mr. Dodwell, "in the end the idea prevailed so far as to obtain special representation for the landholders of each province, for commerce and for the Muhammadans. These, it was hoped, would form the wished for counterpoise to the professional classes".

Lady Minto in her biography of her husband records the feeling of the official class in India with regard to the proposal for separate representation. She says, "on the very evening of his address to the Muslim League, Minto received a letter from an official, 'I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a very big thing has happened today. A work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people (Muslims) from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition' " (Congress).*

*There has been controversy in the Press on the authority of Professor Coupland's book on "The Constitutional Problem in India" over the part played by Mr. Archibald in connection with this deputation. I give below an extract from a letter I wrote to the 'Statesman' dated 21-6-1949 in this connection which clearly proves that Mr. Archibald was only a medium between the Viceroy's Private Secretary and Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk; otherwise, why did Mr. Archibald want to remain behind the scenes? After this to argue that the then Government had nothing to do with the matter is merely beating about the bush.

"Your contributor 'G. B. E.' quoted from Sir Richard Coupland's 'The Constitutional Problem in India' to prove that 'there is no evidence to suggest that the deputation was in any sense engineered. It was actually organised by the well known Muslim leader Nawab

I may be forgiven for relating a personal experience in this connection. While the deputation was being organised at Bombay by the late Nawab Mohsinulmulik I was a student at Aligarh and was staying with the Nawab Sahib at the Watson Hostel working temporarily as one of his secretaries. All the correspondence passed through my hands. I used to protest with the Nawab Sahib that such a policy would not ultimately benefit the Mussalmans and would harm the cause of the country. The great Nawab—he was great indeed in many ways—would sometimes put me in my place but at other times would take me to a drive with him and try to explain the deplorable position of the Muslims. Once when he found me unconvinced he declared, "Because I have only one lung you perhaps consider me weak but you forget that if I were to raise the banner of revolt against the British Government your community will not side with me. You forget their misery and plight after 1857. When your

Mohsin-ul-Mulk.' In this way he indirectly tried to disprove my statement that Mr. Archibald, the then Principal of Aligarh College, had nothing to do with the deputation.

As I mentioned in my article, Mr. Archibald's letters from Simla to Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk passed through my hands. Thus I have first-hand knowledge of the correspondence, and no amount of denial from Sir Richard Coupland can convince me. Mr. Archibald, after seeing the Viceroy's Private Secretary, Col. Dunlop Smith, wrote to Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk on August 10, 1906. His letter was printed and confidentially circulated to members of the deputation. A summary of this letter is quoted from the late Maulvi Tufail Ahmad's book in Urdu "Roshan-Mustaqbal" by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in his "India Divided", p. 103 :

"Col Dunlop Smith (Private Secretary to the Viceroy) now writes to me that the Viceroy is prepared to receive the deputation of Musalmans, and intimates me that a formal petition be submitted for it. In this connection the following matters require consideration :—

"The first question is that of sending the petition. To my mind it would be enough that some leaders of Musalmans, even though they may not have been elected, should put their signatures to it. The second is as to who the members of the deputation should be. They should be representatives of all the provinces. The third question is of the contents of the address. In this connection my opinion is that in the address loyalty should be expressed, that thanks should be offered that in accordance with the settled policy steps are going to be taken in the direction of self-government according to which the door will be opened for Indians to offices, but apprehensions should be ex-

generation grows up you might raise the standard of revolt but today we could not do so." . . .

The seed had germinated and it attained luxuriant growth. In 1906 the Muslim League was founded which declared its objects to be three;—

(1) To promote among Muslims feelings of loyalty towards the British Government and to remove possible misunderstandings with the Government.

(2) To watch the political interests and rights of the Musalmans and to bring to the notice of the Government their needs.

(3) Without injuring the objects of the League to discourage the growth of ideas hostile to other communities.

In the same year the Hindu Sabha was also started at Lahore in its present form to protect the rights and privileges of the Hindus. This coincidence is significant.

pressed that by introducing elections injury will be done to the Musalman minority and hope should be expressed that in introducing the system of nomination for granting representation on a religious basis the opinion of Musalmans should be given due weight. The opinion should also be given that in a country like India it is necessary that weight should be attached to the views of the Zamindars.

"My personal opinion is that the wisest thing for Musalmans to do would be that they support the system of nomination because the time for introducing election has not yet come. Besides, it will be very difficult for them if the system of election is introduced to secure their proper share.

"But in all these matters I want to remain behind the scheme and this move should come from you. I can prepare and draft the address for you. If it be prepared in Bombay then I can revise it because I know the art of drawing up a petition in good language. But Nawab Saheb, please remember that if within a short time any great and effective action has to be taken then you should act quickly."

Comment is futile. Needless to say that the address was sent to Simla for correction.

Further Maulana Muhammad Ali who was well-informed and a close associate of Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk in his Presidential address at the Indian National Congress at Cocanda said that this deputation was "a command performance."

I feel tempted here to quote an extract from a letter from Lord Morley to Lord Minto towards the end of 1906 :—

"I won't follow you again into our Mohammadan dispute. Only I respectfully remind you once more that it was your early speech about their extra claims that first started the M (Molsem) hare."

Morley : *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 325.

The entire policy of the Muslims was based upon the memory of their helplessness and degradation up to 1870. The fear of again losing the favour of the Government and their jobs was already there, another fear was now sedulously cultivated, namely, the fear of Hindu domination as a result of political advance. The unconscious contribution of the Hindus to this fear was not less than the conscious contribution of the British.

Thus it is clear that by the opening years of this century the inglorious hankering after Government jobs and the alarm implanted in the hearts and minds of the two communities had already created a wide gulf. That all Muslims were not affected is proved by the lines which Akbar, the famous Urdu poet, wrote about this time:—

*Kati rag-e-ittihad millat rawan hoin khun dil ki
mojen*

*Wo samjhen hain isko a'b safi naha rahen hain
nikhar rahen hain.*

*Qafas hai kam himmati ka simen pare hain kuch
danahai shirin*

*Inhin pe mail hai taba shahin na bal ab hain na
par rahe hin*

For a number of years Muslim politics continued to be guided in this manner, but at last events in India and abroad broke the spell. In 1911 the partition of Bengal was rescinded. In 1912, the Balkan war roused the enthusiasm of the Indian Musalmans who sent a mission under Dr. Ansari in aid of Turkey. In 1914, the great War I broke out and the Turks joined Britain's enemies. Indian Muslims were deeply affected by these events and by the general awakening which was taking place, and many among them began to question the desirability of the policy which the Muslim League had followed since 1906.

The heart searching led at last to a big change. In 1913 the Muslim League in its annual session at Lucknow adopted the Self Rule for India as the goal and came in line with the Congress. In 1915 the Annual Session of the League was held at Bombay along with the Congress

Session. Efforts were made to thwart the League Session but was held despite opposition from the authorities. The League's presidential address was far more radical and critical of the government than that of Congress. Moulana Mazharul Haque set the tone and policy of the League which the League has followed for many years. In 1916, the League and the Indian National Congress both met at Lucknow where the famous Lucknow pact was signed. Its immediate effect was the royal proclamation of August 18, 1917 promising the establishment of responsible self-government in India.

However, no sooner was the war over than the conciliatory policy gave way to one of repression. The Rowlatt Bill was passed and the Jallianwala massacre occurred in 1919. The Muslims were further antagonised by the treaty of Sevres which imposed very severe terms upon Turkey. Thus for the next three or four years the Hindus and the Muslims gave joint battle to the British Government on the issues of Home Rule for India and the restoration of the lands of the Caliphate.

Unfortunately, the back of Hindu-Muslim co-operation was broken as soon as the non-co-operation movement was suspended. The citadel of unity which Gandhiji had so assiduously built up was shattered to pieces. The bombardment of this citadel was cleverly and persistently continued until two years ago it effected the partition of the country—the logical and natural result of the policy hitherto pursued for the whole of the 19th century and after.

CHAPTER X

WHAT THEN OF THE FUTURE ?

Politics has divided the two communities, but political differences are superficial. Groups and communities come together and drift apart; this has happened before in our history. But behind such changes lie the deeper currents of national life.

Politics is a means and not an end. It is an instrument for the realisation of the ideals which a people cherish. The permanent interests of society give shape to the ideas of the good which political activity seeks to attain. The Congress represents these ideals and believes that they can only be achieved through the establishment of a sovereign, secular state. A sovereign state, whether its structure is unitary or federal, implies the existence of a unitary society bound together by common ideals of a good life. A sovereign state upholds and enforces a common system of laws and rights which embody the general will of the groups and the common ideals of communities, which constitute society. A state is strong in so far as it evokes the willing consent and loyalty of its constituent members. Individuals and groups can make supreme sacrifices for the state cheerfully, only when they are convinced that in doing so they are serving the ideals which they regard dearer than life itself. Such ideas and ideals are parts of our cultural heritage.

If we desire, therefore, to build up a strong Sovereign Indian state which will stand four square to the winds blowing from all quarters, we must not seek to establish it on the basis merely of political considerations. Political pacts and understandings are useful and necessary but the guarantee of their permanence lies in the mutual confidence of the communities. This confidence can only be generated when there is mutual respect and genuine appreciation of the ideals which the groups entertain and hold dear.

For one hundred years and more we have been engaged in the suicidal task of building up exclusive organisations of Hindus and Muslims. We have sought to shut our hearts to one another in the vain hope that exclusiveness will bring us strength. In our cultural movements we have aimed not at reconciliation but at revivalism. The writers of Marathi, Bengali and Hindi, for example, have considered it a part of their duty to eliminate from their writings words of Islamic origin. Our historians have tended to slur over the common achievements of both. Our artists seek to draw inspiration from pre-Muslim monuments or from Persian models and our poets only sing of the glories associated with kingdoms remote from us in time or in space.

If India's political future is to be built up on lasting foundation, this process must be reversed. We must retrace our steps from this path which leads away from the genius of the Indian race. If there is one characteristic of our history which distinguishes us from other peoples, it is the remarkable power of adjustment which we have displayed. In the remote ages we brought about an adjustment between Aryan and Dravidian cultures; later, the Aryo-Dravidians absorbed the races of Sakas, Hunas, Jats and Abhirs, who entered our country through the north-western passes. In the Middle Ages we produced a culture in which earlier Indian and Muslim elements were most wonderfully fused together, but our task is now harder and greater—it is not merely to continue the process of cultural synthesis which the Mughals had begun, but to complete it.

The situation though full of difficulties is not hopeless. Never before was India so closely united so far as the physical and material aspects of life are concerned as it is today. This we owe to the discoveries and inventions of science. Distances have been reduced, means of communications multiplied, movements of men and materials tremendously accelerated. Again, the development of modern science has given a certain intellectual kinship to the entire world which it had never possessed before. The Hindus and Muslims with the rest of the nation study

the same branches of knowledge and follow the same methods of pursuing truth. Powerful forces, the pressure of world wide movements, the reaction of international happenings and new menaces are shaking up peoples' minds. The great movements which have stirred the East during the last 50 years based upon new ideas of social justice and of democratic distribution of power are preparing our minds for the vision of new social orders.

The Indian National Congress had endeavoured to give expression to this vision of a new order and Mahatma Gandhi had ever since his entry into Indian politics strove to lead India towards the goal of unity and freedom. At his instance the Congress adopted the constructive programme with its three fold flank of Hindu-Muslim unity, Khadi and removal of untouchability. At great personal risk he undertook in 1924 at Delhi the terrible fast of 21 days to shock Hindu Muslim conscience into a realisation of the present situation. He did the same in his last fast and achieved results.

Why then did the solution elude our grasp and communal differences ultimately partition the country? Our failure was due not to any lack of desire to solve the problem but to the inadequacy of our methods. The principal line of approach was political. The Congress mainly concentrated on the issue political. Many eminent nationalist leaders showed profound ignorance of the cultural achievements of the past and their significance. Others genuinely interested in the cultural aspect of national life suffered from particularistic outlook.

Many Congressmen have been attracted by the alluring prospects of political power and patronage, they have tended to neglect the quieter, the less ostentatious but more important work connected with the constructive programme, and have forgotten that political independence can only be maintained on the solid foundations of cultural unity.

Thus the immediate need is to create mutual confidence among the people, rather than to vindicate the principle of 'orthodox Parliamentarism' or to realise any ideal schemes of economic or political reconstruction.

Cultural reapprochment is the only means for creating this mutual confidence and the first essential of this is a change of outlook.

The Congress is a national body and it must stand true to its professions. Unfortunately many Congressmen attempt to combine communalism in culture with nationalism in politics, with the result that the Congress as a whole fails to convince large sections of the people that it is a completely non-communal body with the clear and unmistakable attributes of a national organisation. If Congressmen are anxious that India should be an integrated State they must realise that the groups inhabiting this land must cherish certain things in common that will bind them together and enable them to transcend their differences. What else can achieve this but be culture?

The material basis of this culture is already there; a country with great resources, its geographical unity marked unmistakably by mountains and seas; a population composed of racial types of such blended strains as are unknown in other regions of the earth; and a common economic system based upon the predominance of agriculture.

Nor are spiritual elements of a unified culture entirely lacking; common historical traditions, a tangled skein of conflict and co-operation covering a period of one thousand years, of Muslim rulers assisted by Hindu ministers and Hindu Rajas served by Muslim captains, of Hindu and Muslim allies combating common foes and fighting common battles and of Hindu and Muslim officers jointly executing common policies and solving common problems, common languages spoken in different provinces which have been enriched and developed by the common efforts of Hindu and Muslim writers—Punjabi, Hindi, Sindhi, Brij Bhasha, Avadhi, Bengali, Gujarati, Urdu and others, a common political system which at present imposes an equal burden upon all communities and fulfils impartially the aspirations of all groups for an independent life; and lastly a common education which has been moulding the intellect and character of the educated classes all over

the country in similar institutions, with identical methods of teaching and curricula.

On these foundations we have to build the super-structure of a common Indian culture. The task is worthy of our highest traditions and is certainly not beyond the competence of a body so well intentioned and so broad-based as the Indian National Congress. All that is needed is to approach it in the spirit which inspired Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya, Baba Farid, Mirza Mazhar Jan Janan, Malik Muhammad Jayasi, Rahim, Raskhan, Alaul, Todafmal, Birbal, Abul Fazal, Man Singh, Tansen, and numerous other philosophers, saints, devotees, poets, artists, singers, statesmen, princes, and emperors who created the Indian culture of the Middle ages. The spirit which inspired them was not that clinging attachment to tradition which is characteristic of men who have lost faith in themselves and whose minds seek security in the anchorage of the past. Rather were they so sure of themselves, so filled with active moving principles of life, that they were "content to feel their soul pervaded though retaining its own personality, by a being immeasurably mightier than itself, just as an iron is pervaded by the fire which makes it glow". Hence they mingled themselves generously with the current of the larger life of India and while remaining themselves, they also lost themselves in the wholeness of the great society and culture which was "joy in joy, love of that which is all love".

It is this dynamic principle of social and cultural life which gives courage and destroys narrowness and distrust that we have to recapture in our life. Abul Fazal, in his introduction to the Persian translation of the Mahabharata which was undertaken at the instance of the Emperor Akbar, gives emphatic expression to this principle. He says, "Since on thorough personal enquiry numerous sectarian differences were found among the Muhammadan and Hindu religions, and as the task of their reconciliation seemed beyond estimate, the truth discerning opinion came to the decision that authoritative works of various sects be translated into the languages of

the opponents to enable the two sects with the blessings of the holy truth of His Majesty, the most perfect of his times, to emerge out of the excesses of dissensions and quarrels and seek after truth; and having acquainted themselves of each other's quality and defects, to endeavour to their best to improve themselves."

I experimented the truth of this statement, when I read out Gita in Urdu verses by Chaudhuri Dil Mohammad of Lahore to Muslims, who honestly regarded Hindus as "unbelievers", their eyes were opened and some of them thought it was translation from the Quran. If Urdu and Hindi translations of Gita, Upanishads and portions of the Quran are easily made available, the two groups will ipso facto come nearer to each other.

We must promote this understanding. It is not necessary for the Hindus and Muslims to abandon their religion or religious observances, but they ought to acquaint themselves with what is contained in each other's religion.

CHAPTER XI

PATHS TO RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

Apart from religion there remains the vast field of culture where acquaintance and understanding should lead to unity and reconciliation. Literature and art cover a considerable part of the field. Great strides were taken towards the evolution of a common language and literature in the Middle ages. Not only did Hindus and Muslims contribute to the development of provincial languages and literatures, but their united efforts also gave birth to the language which became the *lingua franca* of the North and the Deccan and which in different times was known by different names—Urdu, Hindi, Hindustani, Rekhta, a language which blind political controversy is doing its best to destroy although it is one of the finest products of Hindu-Muslim co-operation and has been a pliable and sensitive instrument of their intercourse and self-expression.

The Congress owes a duty to itself; not only should it maintain this common heritage of our past, but should enrich and embellish it. Let there be no mis-understanding on this matter. The recognition of this common Hindustani does not imply the discouragement or neglect of any other language or literature. It only means that in the matter of language we should render unto the nation what belongs to the nation and to communities and provinces what is due to them.

Bitter controversy rages round this problem today. Our attitude on this matter is the acid test of our nationalism. Language is the instrument of communion and fellowship. Do we desire to enter into communion and fellowship with one another or to keep aloof and herded into exclusive groups? If we are to live as members of a single and united nation, it is the height of unfairness and folly to exclude from our language elements contributed by either of them. Indian nationalism will not attain a

healthy growth, if we sever it from its roots whether these go down into the recent or remote past of India.

Among the problems of culture the place of language is fundamental and upon its correct solution largely depends the solution of the other problems. Regarding the question of language, Dr. Beni Prasad has pointed out forcibly its importance. He says, "Common education raises the whole question of language. Language touches life in all its departments and is therefore closely bound up with sentiment. It constitutes the central point in every cultural adjustment. All history witnesses to the unifying or harmonising influence of a common language. The last hundred years have demonstrated in Europe that nothing is resented so keenly and resisted so desperately as an attack, real or fancied, on one's language.....literary purism, that is the movement for eliminating the so-called rhetoric terms, is usually inspired by political motives.....Political separation is partly responsible in India for the divergence of Hindi and Urdu from each other. A *tour de force* in Sanskritization or Arabicisation seems to promise all the elements of a communal triumph". (*Hindu-Muslim Question*—pp. 116, 119.)

Where script is concerned, there is no difficulty in recognising and teaching both the Urdu and the Nagari ways of writing. They can be easily learnt and need not tax the energies of anyone.

This was Mahatma Gandhi's solution of the language and script problems and time will only show that he was right.

Cultural understanding will also be promoted by a right interpretation of the past. Indian history has too long been the sport of imperialist-minded European historians and their slavish Indian imitators. There is urgent need for an independent school of history. Similarly Indian contributions to philosophy and religious thought, not only in ancient times but equally in the medieval period, need to be elucidated and popularised.

Literature embodies the aspirations and the ideals of a nation. All the world over literary societies, academies

and governments spend considerable amounts of money for the encouragement of creative literary efforts. Traditions of generous patronage of literature and art on the part of the Asiatic rulers are too well-known to need any detailed reference. Organised efforts in this direction are as necessary in this country today.

Great opportunities also rest in the field of social and educational activity. Hindu-Muslim co-operation has to be promoted in civic activities, in festive celebrations, in volunteer corps, scout and girl guide associations, in theatres and cinemas. Our college and university education has to be broadened in its ideology and outlook, and the means of propagating useful knowledge like radio, press, books and newspapers, have to be more intelligently and systematically utilised. In short, in the numerous manifestations of national life Hindus and Muslims must learn to associate together, for their common effort will give them a fund of unifying experience.

To demand loyalty from the minority is foolish, it causes resentment. Instead, the majority should create conditions, in the words of Pandit Nehru, which will make the minority community loyal to the core. Mahatmajid created such conditions but unfortunately he did not live to accomplish it. In a very short time he made the minority community in India realise where their real interest lay. Perhaps he realised that a happy and contented Muslim community in India will also help in checking the disruptive tendencies in the social structure of our country which are now slowly but surely raising their heads.

A word to my Muslim brethren. They have forgotten, if I may venture to say, the universalism preached by the Quran. "All human beings are brothers" says the Quran. "All human beings belong to one family" says the Prophet. A Christian can be a good Christian without believing in Hinduism, in Islam or Judaism. Similarly a Hindu can be a good Hindu without believing in other religions. So Jews or Zorastrians need not believe in other religions for being good Jews or Zorastrians. But a Muslim, according to the Quran, cannot be a Muslim at all unless and until he believes "in all the Prophets and

in all the revealed Books and there is no discrimination whatsoever between the different Prophets" (vide *Surai Baqar*, verse 282). It further says that God had sent Prophets to all climes and countries. "Those who differentiate between the Prophets and want to believe in some and disbelieve in others and thereby wish to choose a *via media* between belief and disbelief such men are unbelievers (Kafirs) without the slightest doubt". (Vide *Surai Nisa*, verse 150). Islam, therefore, is the religion of humanity and because of this universalism and humanitarian outlook of Islam, as preached by the Quran, our Prophet is called the last of the Prophets as he was sent in this world to preach the last word—the Human Brotherhood.

The Muslim should learn Sanskrit and Hindi on large scale and study Gita and other Books of Hindus. They forced cultural contact on Hindus, not only in medieval but in early times when India was not their home in spite of "suspicion and reserve" of the people of this country. That the Indian Muslims belong to India they can put a greater justification force upon the Hindus the cultural contact in spite of their proverbial "reserve and suspicion" and be worthy of their rich heritage.

If we take up in all earnestness and with the zeal of early Muslims, this forgotten lesson of universalism of the Holy Quran, we might yet recover our lost ground. In this central idea of the Quran and preaching of the Prophet lies our salvation and salvation of the world.

To my Hindu brethren I would repeat the conversation I had with Mahatma Gandhi in December, 1947. He told me, "People seem to think that because I am a good man and unity is also a good thing so I preach unity". I asked him, "What then"? He replied, "No, because in Hindu-Muslim unity, I consider, lies the salvation of India". "Even now"? I asked. He answered "Yes, even now". Once this is attained nothing can stand in the way of realising our destiny.

A previous article gave glimpses of earlier cultural contact of India with Islamic countries. In the course of which India made ample contributions to the Muslim

Arabs by imparting to them her knowledge of medicine, mathematics and astronomy and the Arabs in their turn greatly improved on it and gave it to Europe.

It is true that Muslims came to India first as foreigners but they soon settled down in this country and severed all connections with their homeland and became sons of the soil in every sense of the term. Their administrative organisation was gradually adapted to Indian conditions and by the time of the Mughals it became more and more national rule though not strictly so in the modern sense of the word. This process was continuing when the British appeared on the scene and the process was arrested then.

At last, after nearly two hundred years of foreign rule, India is in a position today to resume, with advantage to both, her cultural and political contacts with the Islamic countries of Western Asia and North Africa. India can lead them with her vast material resources and advanced political thinking to prosperity and unity which these countries badly need and with their help and support India can make her voice felt in the comity of nations in her efforts to promote peace and harmony in the world. As the leader of Asia, India may one day lead the world, not for promoting plans of aggression and discord but to guide it along the paths of Non-violence and Truth. This destiny awaits us and the goal is within our grasp only if we can shed our narrowness and insularity, our petty bickerings and disputes and enshrine in our hearts the feelings of good fellowship and harmony and realise that we are members of one brotherhood dedicated to the service of humanity.

Pakistan may seek alliance with one or other great Powers but she will ultimately discover that her real interest lay nearer home—in closest contact and friendship with India. This is true for both the countries.

The present differences between the two countries will evaporate the moment they decide to have a joint or common defence. This will give strength both to Pakistan and India. This will be, in my humble judgment, the

panacea for all present-day evils between these two countries.

The more you think of the important role both the countries can jointly play in the affairs of the world with Asiatic countries at their back, the more you realise the great future possibilities of this wise step.

I was fully convinced of it for more than a year but I never said anything about it publicly for fear of being misunderstood. The recent utterances in this connection of some responsible persons in Pakistan pleased me beyond measure and encouraged me to open my lips.

We see all round us in the world the ruin and destruction that hatred breeds. But love never fails; it hides within it the great secret of life and creation. It is my most earnest prayer that we may have the wisdom to understand our true and abiding interests and the strength to stand by the right, even against our own kith and kind, for truth is after all greater even than one's community or country.

